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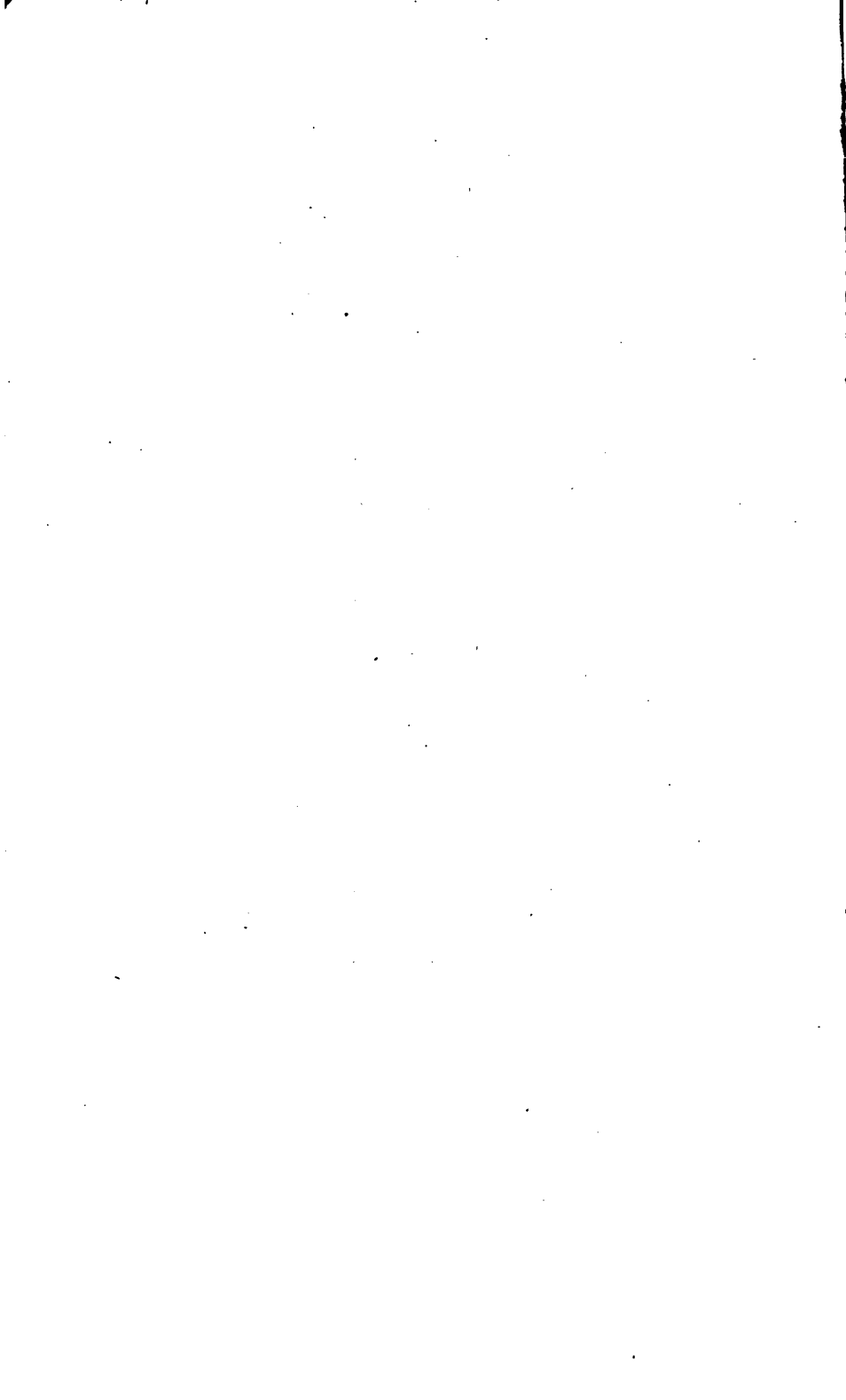
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THE
AUTHENTICITY,
UNCORRUPTED PRESERVATION,
AND
CREDIBILITY
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT.

BY
GODFREY LESS,
LATE PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GÖTTINGEN, &c.

TRANSLATED FROM
THE LAST EDITION OF THE GERMAN.

BY
ROGER KINGDON, A.M.
OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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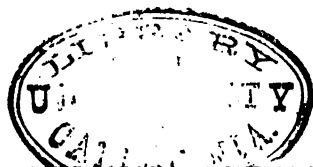
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE subject of the work now offered to the public in an English translation is an examination of the following questions: Whether the books of the New Testament were really written by the persons to whom they are ascribed; Whether they have descended to us perfectly uncorrupted in all essential matters, as they left the hands of their authors; And, lastly, Whether they contain a narration of events which did actually take place.

That this inquiry is of the greatest consequence, and demands our most impartial attention, will be evident from these considerations:—That if we cannot answer the above questions in the affirmative, then is the Christian Religion a cunningly devised fable:—but, on the contrary, if in result of the examination, it should be found that the New Testament is both genuine and authentic,—then it

will require but few arguments to shew that the miracles contained in it, are true, that the writers were inspired persons, and that our holy faith is a revelation of the will of God.

On this subject the learned author of the following work, Dr. Lefs, had himself entertained doubts during many years of his life: for his own private satisfaction he instituted a severe and rigid inquiry: the result is exhibited to the Public in the present treatise; and to himself the consequence was a solid, rational, and satisfactory conviction. The Original was put into my hands, during my residence in Germany, by a person of distinguished worth: on perusal it appeared to me extremely well calculated, from its conciseness, perspicuity, and severity of examination to produce the same effect on others, and to be of service to the Christian cause; as I cannot conceive it possible for any man, who honestly and impartially seeks after truth, to read it with the attention which the subject demands, without receiving the same conviction which the author himself obtained.—This opinion of the original work first led me to form the design of translating it into my native language.

Few

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

Few are the writers who have expressly treated on the Authenticity of the books of the New Testament, and fewer still who have done it in a manner always satisfactory to the reader. Du Pin is miserably defective: and Jones seems to have been anxious rather to shew that certain writings are Apocryphal, than to prove that the books of the New Testament are Canonical. Indeed he has passed over all the Epistles and the Apocalypse without paying the least regard to them.

But since his time Dr. Lardner has employed immense labour and profound erudition on the same subject: nor do I know any man to whom the Christian world has more obligations than to the author of the *Credibility of the Gospel-History*. He appears to have almost exhausted his subject, and to have rendered any subsequent undertaking of a similar nature perfectly unnecessary. Instead of giving my own opinion on the difference between the present treatise and the voluminous work of Lardner, I will lay before the reader the sentiments of the great Michaelis and of the Rev. Herbert Marsh, one of the most accurate Theological scholars that any age or country has ever produced. "The best treatises" says Michaelis

“ upon this subject (the authenticity of the New Testament) are Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel-History, and Less's Truth of the Christian Religion (the subject of the following sheets). The former of these works, which has been censured for its prolixity, contains a very large collection of testimonies from the Fathers and other ancient writers, and is highly valuable to those who would examine the whole series of evidence for the authenticity of the New Testament. The works of Lardner have been less read, than they deserve: every one interested in this inquiry should possess them, were it only for occasional reference, and they are indispensable to a clergyman, who cannot remain indifferent on so important a subject, and whose duty is not only to believe but to be convinced. The latter of these works is more agreeable to read because prolixity is avoided, and it is easy to oversee the whole chain of reasoning at a single view. Various testimonies which Lardner had quoted, are omitted by Less, because they were not sufficiently convincing, and he has supplied what Lardner had omitted. Every reader will remark, in perusing this treatise, what I have learnt in frequent conversation with the author,

that it is the result of a conscientious, even anxiously conscientious inquiry, which he had instituted for his own private conviction. Doubts on which Lardner never thought, he has felt and proved."—Thus far Michaelis: and his learned translator has borne his testimony to the value of the present work in a note to the passage just quoted: "It would be impossible" says he "to give an abridgement of it in these notes, as the author himself is very concise: but the whole deserves to be translated in a separate work."—To the testimony of such authorities I will add nothing: that which has obtained the praise of Michaelis, and the recommendation of Marsh, needs no further panegyric.

I have only to say a few words in respect to the translation.—It is made from the last edition of the Original printed at Gottingen 1786, and is always, it is hoped, faithful to the sense of the author, and generally as literal as the peculiar idioms of the different languages will allow. The whole work of Dr. Less, which is called by the general name of *Geschichte der Religion*, or *History of Religion*, is comprised in three volumes. The first is employed on the history of both natural and revealed Re-

ligion. In the second the divine origin of Christianity is proved at large. And the third is occupied with the examination and refutation of objections to the Christian Religion.

As the following treatise is taken from the body of a work of such magnitude, which is only divided according to the grand divisions of the subject, I conceived it necessary to alter its form by breaking it into the subdivisions of books, chapters &c.; in order that the connection of one part with another might be more readily perceived, and the whole more easily comprehended. From the same cause I have sometimes omitted a word, a sentence, or even a whole paragraph, which appeared unnecessary in the present inquiry, and had an evident reference to parts of the work unconnected with the subject of these sheets.

In the quotations from the Holy Scriptures, Lefis has frequently paraphrased the passage, from a desire to convey the sense without retaining the obsolete phraseology of the authorised translation of his country. It was my wish to have always adhered literally to our English version; but, as a translator, I have been obliged, in order to retain my author's argument, to retain the form in which it is

con-

conveyed, and have therefore been sometimes compelled to render his paraphrase word for word, when I could not introduce the common version.

I have ventured in one or two cases to change the examples adduced by the author for others more familiar to an English reader; these are so unimportant that I do not think it necessary to indicate the particular instances.

However unimportant in point of magnitude may be the present work, yet it contains a large body of information. The subject matter, which if dilated in the modern fashion, would fill a folio, is here condensed into one small volume. This conciseness has tended to render the style of the Original extremely inelegant; and may perhaps have had a similar effect on the Translation. To which must be added, that conceiving perspicuity in a work of this kind to be a paramount quality, I have studied to make my book rather lucid than elegant, and have been more anxious that the reader should be convinced by the solidity of the argument, than delighted by the beauty of the expression.

Some time since I had formed an intention of publishing in the English language Dr. Lef's
larger

larger work On the Truth of the Christian Religion, and had made no small progress in the translation: that intention I have relinquished for the present; whether at any future period I may renew the design will depend on causes which are not under my direction.

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PART I.
THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT.

BOOK I.
Of the Internal Evidence.

CHAP. I.
The Necessity of this Inquiry.

THE faith of Christians is thus distinguished from all the other religions of the world: it pronounces Jesus to be the Redeemer of men, promised by God, the only cause of their salvation, and asserts his doctrine to be undeniably true. Should there, then, never have existed in the world a person, who, in the time of the Roman Emperor Augustus, was born at Bethlehem of Mary, a Jewish virgin, and known

to his countrymen by the name of Jesus; should this Jesus never have performed any *miracles*, in order to prove the truth of his doctrines; should he not have arisen from the dead; should he, lastly, have never uttered any true *prophecies*; then the Articles of the Christian Faith are, without doubt, a forgery. But should these facts be incontrovertibly true, then it is equally incontrovertible, that the religion of Christians is also true. The Christian religion, therefore, is *founded on facts*, and consequently must be proved in the same manner as we prove the truth of other historical subjects.

The evidences which Christians adduce for the truth of these facts, are contained in the Books of the New Testament. The authors of these books are the witnesses, on whose credit Christians believe that history. If, therefore, the credibility of these authors, and of their writings, can be as strictly proved

proved as the credibility of a Tacitus, Livy, Thuanus, or Burnet, then we must either give up the greatest, most beautiful, and most useful part of human knowledge, the whole of history, together with all its various branches, or we must confess—that the Books of the New Testament, in all *natural* and *not miraculous subjects*, are worthy of credit.

I acknowledge, that should the credibility of the writers of the New Testament be brought even to the very highest degree of historical certainty, that the *historical truth* of the *miracles* they relate would not be thereby proved. An author may be in the highest degree worthy of credit, and yet may sometimes be overcome by the weakness incident to human nature, and relate absurdities or forged miracles as undoubted truths. We believe him in general; but if he relate *palpable absurdities*, *sound Reason* be-

4 *The Authenticity of*

comes an evidence against him, and her decision is infinitely more to be depended upon, than the credibility of any author whatever. We believe him in general; but if he relate *miracles*, then his credit *alone* is not sufficient justly to challenge our assent. The more *uncommon* an event is, so much more weighty must be the proofs for it. If it be a real *miracle*, then it demands a perfectly peculiar kind of proof, of which I shall speak in the Second Volume of this Work, when I treat of the Truth of the Christian Religion. According to these principles we decide on all historical writings. We acknowledge Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Tacitus, and Livy, to be perfectly credible authorities. Nevertheless, when they speak of a certain divine vapour, which arose from the earth, and in-filled into men a perfect knowledge of all futurity; or of a ring around the nose, out of which the devil was driven;
or

or when they inform us, that the statue of Jupiter spoke and perspired; that it rained blood; that the Emperour Vespasian, by a mere touch, gave sight to a blind man; in such cases we claim the privilege of refusing our belief, or at least of entirely passing them over as doubtful.

There are no other rules enabling us to judge of the writings of the New Testament, than those by which we judge of any other historical work. Now we are accustomed to establish the credibility of a book in the following manner:—We first prove the authenticity of the book itself, and then the credibility of its author. Two things belong to the proof of the authenticity; first, that the book was really written by the pretended author; and secondly, that it is come down to us perfectly uncorrupted as it left the hands of its author. In this manner we decide on all historical writings; and men are

6. *The Authenticity of*

unanimously agreed, that it is as unreasonable to receive an evidence which cannot be proved in this way, as to reject that which has endured these proofs. A man of accuracy and integrity will never attempt to prove the truth of an event, which is pretended to have happened in the first century, from what are called the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite; for the name of Dionysius, which they bear, is forged, and they were not composed until the fifth or sixth century. Nor will he, like Whiston, believe any thing on the authority of the larger epistles of Ignatius. Ignatius did indeed write epistles; but whatever exists in the larger, that is not found in the smaller, (and even these appear to be not absolutely free from all interpolation) is the addition of a more modern hand. Orosius is no credible evidence for the truth of events, which are pretended to have taken place at the birth of Jesus;
nor

nor will a critic assert any thing on the credit of Simeon Metaphrastes. The former did not write until the fifth century; and the latter is extremely credulous and much to be suspected: neither of them therefore deserves to be esteemed a credible evidence.

Can, then, the three following propositions be proved:—First, *that the New Testament was really written by the pretended contemporaries of Jesus*;—Secondly, *that it is come down to us uncorrupted*;—and, Thirdly, *that the authors of it are evidences of credibility*;—still we cannot, on their credit alone, prove the truth of the *miracles* they relate;—but thus much will be evident, that Jesus did really preach the doctrine acknowledged by Christians; that he was really born at Bethlehem, taught publicly in Judea, in the reign of Tiberius:—in a word, all the events which are *natural*, and *not miraculous*, must be considered as incontestibly

of the ecclesiastical writers of the first centuries on this subject.

In this inquiry we are principally concerned with the period of the three first centuries, that is, from the times of the apostles down to Origin.—For he has given us the first perfect catalogue of the Scriptures of the New Testament; and since his time these catalogues, (or canons), and the evidences for each of the books of the New Testament are so numerous, that it would be perfectly superfluous to attempt to prove that since the fourth century the very same books of the New Testament were held by Christians to be divine, which we at present confess to be such^b. Moreover, subsequent information is inadequate to establish the authenticity of the Scriptures of

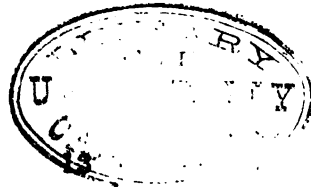
^b These canons are found according to the order of the centuries, in *Gerhardi de Mastricht Canon ecclesiasticus Scriptura Sacrae*.—The latest and best edition of this work is that of Jena, 1725, in 8vo.

the New Testament. It is too recent, and the foregoing centuries were too replete with spurious and forged works to be capable of instructing us confidently what writings were actually composed by the disciples of Jesus in the first century. But of so much greater consequence to us is the period of the three first centuries; and it is a very great error in the defenders of Christianity, when they, either by contenting themselves merely with the well-known evidences of Eusebius; or, by producing quotations from the primitive writers, which are perfectly indeterminate; or, by accumulating such passages from them as have only a similitude in words and sentiments, bring a suspicion on the whole proof for the authenticity, and consequently also for the divinity, of these books.

Whoever has been much engaged with the writings of antiquity, its modes of thinking and manners, will instantly perceive,

perceive, on reading these books, that they are not the work of an impostor, but that they were composed about the first century of the Roman monarchy; just as a connoisseur in the fine arts will immediately see whether a painting, a statue, or a gem, be the production of antiquity, an original; or merely a copy, and of a modern age. In the Scriptures of the New Testament there cannot be discovered the smallest trace of deceit or forgery. On the contrary, the character of the pretended times of their composition, and of their pretended authors, is so deeply impressed on them, that a critic, by a mere perusal, will discover their authenticity.

It must appear remarkable to any one who has ever employed himself in distinguishing the genuine remains of antiquity from the spurious, that in these writings there cannot be found the smallest vestige of a forgery. What are called the *Canones* and *Constitutiones*



the New Testament.

tiones Apostolorum, speak of altars, of the ordination of bishops and priests, of the subjection of the Holy Ghost to the Son. The pretended writings of Dionysius, a Member of the Court of Areopagus, refute Nestorian and Anthropomorphic errors; use the word *ὑποστάσις* in the doctrine of the trinity; and speak of monks, altars, and liturgies. And, in the same manner, all interpolated writings contain something or other, a custom, a science, an expression, which betrays a later age, and does not escape the eye of the critic. On the contrary, we cannot meet with any thing in the Scriptures of the New Testament, which does in the least degree contradict the pretended character, time, and connection of their authors. And not only this: we discover in them such traces of genuineness as are indeed extremely striking.

The writers of the New Testament are said to have been *Jews by birth,*
and

and of the Jewish religion; and this is every where visible. The mode of relating their story, so unaffected, and mixed with various superfluous phrases, and trifling collateral circumstances; the numerous allusions to the religious ceremonies of the Jews; the subject matter interwoven with words, phrases, and thoughts of the Old Testament; the numerous parables and allegories; the variety of Hebraic words, constructions, and phrases in the Greek of the New Testament, betray an author to whom the Jewish mode of thinking was quite natural.

They are said to have *lived in the first century of the Roman monarchy*. This also is easily and every where perceptible. The exact division of the Jewish state; its connection with the Romans; the internal transactions and fermentations which took place in it at the time of the first Roman Emperors, are not so properly related by the
writer

writer as presupposed as matters of fact, which were universally known at the time when he wrote. The little unimportant, foreign events of the first century, which in the books of the New Testament, and especially in the historical, are touched on only casually and very slightly, in so unstudied and unaffected a manner, evince a writer, to whose memory these facts were still quite recent, and who presupposed that his contemporaries were as well acquainted with them as himself. I shall give examples of this in the course of the work.

They are said to have been *immediate witnesses of their narratives*, or to have themselves seen and heard what they relate. Even this circumstance is every where clearly discoverable. They relate with the confidence of men who are convinced that their readers already know that they themselves saw and experienced all, and that their assertions may

may therefore be considered as proofs. They relate, without mentioning the eras of their history, or carefully characterising the person of whom they make mention: in short, like men who wrote for readers that were their contemporaries, that lived at the very time in which their history happened, and knew, or might easily have known, the persons themselves.

They are said to have been *all, except one, unlearned men*. And who does not remark in the writings of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, St. John, St. Peter, St. James, and St. Jude, that they were composed by persons who were indeed perfectly certain of the facts they relate; possessed also of sound judgment, and in part of excellent natural talents, yet totally devoid of learning, and what is properly called science? We find in their works no profound inferences; no refutations which betray subtilty; no expressions or similes taken
taken

taken from the walks of science; no acquired knowledge of the world: In every part the tone of an honest historian is peresptible, but of one to whom it never occurred to argue on his narrative as a philosopher. Compare their writings with those of St. Paul. If we even put out of the question the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is replete with Jewish learning; yet what profound inferences are drawn in the Epistle to the Romans^c? What a variety of fine knowledge, and how much adroitnefs in defending himself with delicacy and subtilty against the accusations of his enemies, are betrayed in the Epistles to the Corinthians? With what acuteness does he oppose the doctrine of the necessity of circumcision, and of adherence to the Mosaic law, in the Epistle to the Galatians^d? The Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thef-

^c Particularly ch. v. 9.

c

^d ch. iii.—v.

salonians,

salonians, contain a variety of similes taken from profane knowledge; allusions to foreign customs; a luxuriance of ideas; pathetic and strong refutations of accusations*. The Epistles to Timothy and Titus shew in particular a mind which, from experience and philosophic observation of the world, had obtained considerable legislative knowledge. And the Epistle to Philemon has almost, if I may be allowed to say it, the style of courtly urbanity.

If, therefore, we knew nothing of the real authors of these books, and were to form our judgment of them only from what we discover internally, we should suppose that they were written by native Jews, during the first century, and by immediate witnesses, and that only one of them was a scho-

* For example, Ephes. ii. 20—22. iii. 14—19. iv. 9. 10. v. 3. vi. 10—17. Philip. ii. 17. Coloss. ii. 14—18. 1 Theff. iv. 13—18. &c.

lar.—This matter deserves a more ample inquiry.

The Scriptures of the New Testament are *composed in the Greek language*. This agrees very accurately with the accounts we have of their authors, and of the time and design of their composition. The Greek language was at that period, in the first century of the Roman monarchy, and had been, since Alexander the Great, a kind of universal language, just as the French is at present. It was understood and spoken by Greeks, by Romans, and by Jews. The greater part of the Christians also, especially of those to whom the Epistles of the New Testament are addressed, would not have comprehended them so universally in any other language. At Corinth, Thessalonica, Colosse, and in Galatia, scarcely was another language understood. Besides the Latin and Aramæan tongues, the

Greek also was understood at Rome, and by the Jews in Palestine.

The Greek, in which the New Testament is written, is *not pure and elegant* Greek, such as was written by Plato, Xenophon, Polybius, or Plutarch; but is intermixed with many *Hebraic significations, phrases, and constructions*. It resembles pure classical Greek as much probably as the French or German, written or spoken by a native Englishman, which must be constantly mixed with some Anglicisms, resembles the languages of Dresden or of Paris. This is a very striking mark of the authenticity of these writings. Had the Greek of the New Testament been pure, elegant, classical, it would be evident that the writers were either native Greeks, or scholars who had studied Greek; as the writings of Philo or Flavius Josephus betray the scholar. But, since we find it intermixed with many peculiarities belonging

longing exclusively to the Hebrew or Chaldee, and Syriac, (the two languages spoken in common life by the Jews of Palestine) it is evident, from this Hebraic Greek, that the writers were *unlearned*, and *Jews* by birth.

The Scriptures of the New Testament are composed in a style, which very evidently betrays that their authors were *born and educated in the Jewish religion*. We find in them constant allusions to offerings, priests, the temple, articles of dress, and other parts of the Jewish divine service. The sentiments of the Old Testament are rather interwoven into the body of them, than quoted. To make Jesus a sin-offering; to sprinkle with the blood of Jesus; to be born again; to be a temple of God: who does not recognize the Jew in these expressions?—When, in the Epistle to the Romans^f, the then existing sufferings and perse-

^f Chap. viii. 36.

cutions of the Christians are described in the words of the 44th Psalm—*As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter*; when the murder of the infants at Bethlehem ² is told also in the language of Jeremiah—*In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted*: when the writer of the Epistle to the Romans ³ expresses the common sentiment, that he taught Christianity in no place where another had already taught before him, with a passage from the Old Testament—*I stroved to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named—but, as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard, shall understand*: what attentive reader will not discern from such constant and unsolicited

² Mat. ii. 17, 18.

Chap. xv. 20, 21.

accommo-

accommodations of the phraseology of the Old Testament, a writer to whom the religious language of the Jews was, as it were, a mother-tongue?

The Scriptures of the New Testament are all, except those which bear the name of St. Paul, very evidently written in *a style totally devoid of all cultivation, and with the simplicity of unlearned men.* We do not find in them any profound inferences, acute refutations, studied knowledge of the world; or any expressions or comparisons taken from astronomy, physics, anatomy, poesy, architecture, or indeed from any of the arts or sciences.— On the contrary, the writers relate, teach, exhort, exactly as men of sound understanding and good principles, but devoid of any cultivation or learning, would relate, teach, and exhort. Common expressions of common life; various repetitions, and circumstances perfectly superfluous; a want of strict connection

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nection and method; a faulty construction; these constitute the language of men, whose intellectual powers may be found indeed, but entirely uncultivated.

Not less worthy of remark is the *accuracy of many individual circumstances* of their narrative. Jesus, they say, was born under the Roman Emperour Augustus; began his ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, and was put to death about three years and a half afterwards; that on the feast of the Passover, Pilate, a Roman Governour, condemned him to death; that St. Paul defended himself before the Roman Governours, Festus and Felix, before the Jewish King Agrippa, &c.—An impostor would not write so *circumstantially*.

There are moreover certain *historical circumstances* respecting the political and religious constitutions of the world mentioned in the Scriptures of
 4 the

the New Testament, which point out incontestibly the time when they were written. Palestine is divided into three provinces—Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. This country at that time is subject to the Romans, but had been heretofore ruled by its own kings; the Jews have not the absolute power of life and death; at Jerusalem is a Roman Governour. The nation is discontented with the Roman sovereignty; refuses to pay tribute, and is inclined to revolt. Two religious sects have the principal sway among them, viz. the Pharisees and the Sadducees; the former, who teach a mechanical religion, deceive and tyrannize over the people, and yet are almost idolized by them; the latter, who adopt an epicurean philosophy, are strongly supported by the principal characters of the nation. The temple of Jerusalem is still standing, and is annually visited by a great number of the Jews who are scattered abroad

abroad in different parts of the world. These, and similar circumstances, are rather presupposed as universally known, than related by the authors of these writings; and they agree most exactly with the condition of the Jews and the Roman empire in the *first century of the Roman monarchy*.—More will be said on this subject hereafter, in the inquiry into the Credibility of these writers.

BOOK II.

*The external or decisive Evidence for the
Authenticity of the New Testament,
viz. the positive Testimonies of Wit-
nesses in the three first Centuries.*

CHAP. I.

Witnesses in the first Century.

NOTWITHSTANDING what has been said above, I confess that it is not absolutely impossible but that a man of very great talents and extensive learning might, as it were, absolutely forget himself; might, for a time, lay aside his natural modes of thinking and manners, and change himself into a perfectly different person. But the testimonies of the oldest and most credible writers place it beyond all doubt, that the Books of our New Testament were written by the *pretended authors*, St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, St. John,

John, St. Paul, St. Peter, St. James, and St. Jude, and at the *pretended times*.

In this proof I shall quote such passages only, wherein these writers appeal either *by name*, or *expressly* to those books; and honestly confess the doubts which, to an impartial searcher after truth, will occur in this inquiry. I shall thus hinder the enemies of Christianity from using that argument which Bolingbroke has brought against it¹; and if in this examination nothing be *overcharged*; but, on the contrary, if the *love of truth*, and the *strictest severity* of inquiry, be every where discoverable, additional weight, I trust, will be given to my proof.

SECT. I.

The Origin and State of Christianity in the first Century.

JESUS, the Christ, was born in the forty-first year of the government of

¹ See above, page 8.

the Roman Emperour, Augustus, consequently four years earlier than the commonly received computation, or one thousand eight hundred and eight years before the present time ; he taught personally during three years and a half in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee ; and at his death left one hundred and fifty followers of his religion, who were all persons of low birth, and entirely destitute of that consequence which learning or temporal greatness can bestow^k. About seven weeks after his death, the twelve men, who had been his most intimate friends, began to preach his religion in the world. On the first day of their preaching, they established in Jerusalem a community of Christians, consisting of more than three thousand persons^l. And in less than sixty years there existed numerous and flourishing communities of Christians in Asia, as well in the eastern parts towards Persia

^k Acts i.

^l Acts ii.

and

and India, on the Ganges, as in the western; in Africa, at Alexandria and other places; and in Europe, in Macedonia, Greece, nay even at Rome, at that time the metropolis of the world. Thus, at the end of the first century, that small unknown fountain, the parent community at Jerusalem, was become a stream, which had spread itself over every part of the known globe.

These Christian communities formed and supported themselves, notwithstanding the opposition of the whole then existing world. The Jews arose against their members, who taught the abolition of that law which they almost idolized, and represented him whom they had crucified, as the teacher and Saviour of the world. They were then, as at present, dispersed over all the regions of the known earth; and wherever the Christians came, there they found powerful, enraged, and cruel

cruel enemies. To complete their misery, the Emperour Nero declared himself also against them, and put many of them to death by means the most terrible. Thus oppressed and persecuted on all sides, they could neither confess and practice their religion openly, nor establish any external union among themselves; but every separate community was necessitated to endeavour to govern and to support itself in the best manner it was able. Even in this infant state of Christianity, there arose a formal schism among themselves: the disciples, who had been formerly Jews, insisted on retaining their paternal law, and mixed with Christianity the ceremonies of Judaism; while the gentile converts considered the abolition of the law of Moses to be an essential article of the new religion, and would be guided by the doctrine of Jesus Christ alone^m.

^m Acts xv. Rom. xiv.

SECT. II.

The Apostolical Fathers.

THIS want of external union was supplied in a certain degree by different writings, circulated among them by their teachers, of which the greater part is now lost. Only five works, which make pretensions to that early age, are come down to us; and these bear the names of five men, at that time very celebrated—Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp. They are called *apostolical fathers*^a, because

^a The most complete and accurate edition of these works is that which was edited by John Baptist Co-teller, under the title—S. S. Patrum, qui temporibus Apostolorum floruerunt, Barnabæ, Clementis, Hermas, Ignatii, Polycarpi, opera vera et supposititia. Una cum Clementis, Ignatii, Polycarpi Actis atque Martyriis; to which he has added very learned annotations and dissertations. The last and best edition is that of Amsterdam, 1724, 2 vol. fol. published under the inspection of John Le Clerc. Besides the annotations

because they were the immediate disciples of the Apostles. Their high antiquity, and still more their perfect acquaintance with the Apostles, render them particularly important to us in our present inquiry.

1. *Barnabas.*

BARNABAS was appointed, in conjunction with St. Paul the most eminent of the first preachers of Christianity, to publish the religion of Christ among the Gentiles, after they had made many thousand converts among the Jews and Samaritans^o; and is not only placed on a perfect equality with him^p, but is also expressly styled an

tions of the editor, it contains a variety of new and important additions, which are mentioned in the title. Le Clerc himself has pointed out the advantages of this edition in the Biblioth. ancienne et mod. tom. xxi. part 2. p. 237. seq. An useful abridgement of these writings is to be found in Rösler's Library of the Ecclesiastical Fathers.

^o Acts xiii. 2, 3.

^p Acts xiii. 2, 3, 46, 47. 1 Corinth. ix. 4—7.

D

Apostle.

Apostle¹. He left behind him an epistle, which, according to Clement of Alexandria², Origen³, Eusebius⁴, and Jerom⁵, was held in the greatest esteem by the ancients. But whether the work, which we now have under this name⁶, be the very same which Barnabas wrote, and the above-mentioned men read,

¹ Acts xiv. 14.—Comp. verse 4.

² Stromata Lib. ii. *cap.* 20. p. 490. Lib. v. *cap.* 8. p. 677. *cap.* 10. p. 683. 24. Potter's Edit. Oxford, 715 fol. In these places Clement cites whole passages from the Epistle of Barnabas, which are likewise found in that which we have at present.

³ De principiis Lib. iii. *cap.* 4. p. 140, and contra Celsum Lib. i. *cap.* 63. p. 378. Charles De la Rue, and Charles Vincent De la Rue, have edited at Paris all the genuine works of Origen, which are still extant, 1733—1759. iv. vol. fol. The passages pointed out above are in tom. i.—For an account of this edit. of Origen, see Ernesti theol. Biblioth. Vol. vii. p. 371.

⁴ Histor. Eccles. Lib. vi. *cap.* 13, 14. p. 272. 73. vol. i. edit. Guilielmi Reading, who has edited together the ecclesiastical histories of Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, Evagrius, Philostorgius, and Theodorus—Cambridge, 720, iii. vol. fol.

⁵ De Vir. illustr. *cap.* 6.

⁶ See Coteler. Patr. Apostolic. vol. i. p. 15.—66.

is here unimportant, since it quotes, as we shall see hereafter, not a single passage of the New Testament. It contains indeed now the same passages which Clement and Origen have cited from it. But the unnatural mode of interpretation, (known by the name of mystical) which prevails in it; the fables of the Hyæna, &c. which the author believed; and the assertion that the world would be destroyed in its six thousandth year, which is directly contradictory to the assurances of the New Testament, that the time when it should take place was perfectly unknown, make it certain, that this epistle was not written by that Barnabas, who was an Apostle. Nevertheless, the most learned in ancient history are agreed, that it was composed not later than the second century². And we may allow thus much to the testimonies of the pri-

² See Rössler's Library of the Ecclesiastical Fathers, i. 1.

mitive writers, that it was written by a Christian teacher, of the name of Barnabas.

The principal design of this epistle, is to inculcate the proposition which St. Paul in his writings so often repeats, and labours so anxiously to prove, namely, that *Christians are free from all obligation to the law of Moses*. But the author no where refers to this Apostle. St. Paul had already at that time written all his Epistles: he composed the last (the second to Timothy) during his second imprisonment at Rome, in the year of Christ sixty-seven; and Barnabas wrote his in the year seventy. They could not have been unknown to him who was the fellow-apostle and assistant of St. Paul. This is another argument which tends to prove that this epistle, even if composed by a certain Barnabas, did not come from the celebrated Apostle of that name.

To

To him who reads this epistle without any intention of producing testimonies from it in support of the Scriptures of the New Testament, scarcely any will be perceptible. What might be produced with the greatest appearance of probability, are two passages which have been generally brought forward as an evidence for the Gospel of St. Matthew¹. Barnabas is speaking in the seventh chapter of the sufferings of Christ, and delivers this as one of his sayings:—*They who will see me and obtain my kingdom, must receive me with many sufferings and afflictions*². And in the fourth chapter he introduces—*Many are called, but few chosen*, as the declaration of certain divine Scriptures. For he makes use of a phrase which was commonly em-

¹ See *Lardner's Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 14, 15, of the edition of his works, published in 1788.

² Οὗτοι, φησιν, ὁ βίλοντες με ἰδεῖν καὶ ἀλῆσθαι μεν τῆς βασιλείας, οφείλουσι θλιβέντες καὶ παθόντες λαβεῖν με·—Cotel. p. 24.

ployed by the Jews when they quoted their sacred books, *It is written.*—*Let us beware, says he*, lest it should happen to us, as it is written, There are many called, few chosen.*

These passages, it is true, exist in the same, or in very similar words in the Gospel of St. Matthew. But our author does not point out, by a single word, by *whom* these expressions were written, or *where* they are to be found. The first passage does not even prove that the declaration of Christ alluded to, had been taken from any written information. He might, with equal probability, have received it from the oral narration of the Apostles. And with respect to the second, I find no trace, that Barnabas means here expressly the Gospel of St. Matthew. If

* Almost the five first chapters are wanting in the original. In the old Latin version the passage stands thus, p. 60:—*Adtendamus ergo, ne forte, sicut scriptum est, Multi vocati, pauci electi, inveniamur.*

a person,

a person, for example, should read in Plutarch—"We find it related, that the letter of Marcellus, on being received at Rome, did not alleviate the sorrow of the Romans, but rather instilled more terror into them^b;" he would conclude from this passage—"that in the time of Plutarch, credible documents concerning the affairs of the Romans somewhere existed;"—but he would not be inclined to prove from it, that Livy had written a Roman history.

If we cast our eyes on the catalogue of scriptural passages, which the Apostolical Fathers are said to have quoted,

^b This passage is actually found in the above mentioned author, in his life of Marcellus, Vitar. Parall. vol. ii. p. 273. edit. London. 729. in v. vol. 4to. He is speaking of a letter, in which the Proconsul comforts the Romans after a severe defeat which they had suffered from Hannibal, in this manner:—"For he himself was on his march to drive Hannibal out of the country.—Και ταυτα μιν, (continues Plutarch) ὁ Λιβιος φησιν αναγνωσεντα τα γραμματα μη της λυπης αφιλειν αλλα τη φοβῳ προσθιναι."

in the second volume of Cotelierius, and then reflect that their genuine remains are extremely short, we shall be induced to conclude that these authors have done nothing else than copy the Bible. Lardner, indeed, is more rigid in the selection of these testimonies; yet the greater part of the passages which he has quoted are in no respect convincing. I will not delay the reader with the consideration of the other testimonies^c, as I have shewn by the two passages which are generally dwelt upon as of the greatest weight, that Barnabas cannot be placed in the number of evidences for the Authenticity of the New Testament.

^c "Give to every one that asketh thee"—Πᾶσι αἰτουῦσι σε δίδου, says Barnabas, ch. 19. It is pretended that this is a proof of his having read the Gospel of St. Matthew, because the same command is found in it, ch. v. 42. Dr. Lardner himself perceives the weakness of this proof; and therefore says, p. 16—"It may be questioned, whether he refers at all to any *written gospel*."

2. Clemens

2. Clement of Rome.

UNDER the name of Clement, who was Bishop of Rome, and an assistant of the Apostle St. Paul^d, we have different writings; but of these only the two epistles to the Christian community at Corinth can offer any pretension to this title.

Of the *second* epistle, as it is called, there is only a fragment remaining^e, which nevertheless exhibits pretty evident marks of forgery. Irenæus^f was acquainted with only one epistle of Clement, and from this he has quoted.

^d Philip. iv. 3.

^e See Coteler. vol. i. 185—189. John Lewis Frey also has published an accurate edition of the works of Clement, Ignatius, and Polycarp, (Basel. 1742. 8vo.) which I shall use for the purpose of quotation in the following work, on account of its conveniency. What remains of that which is called the second epistle, stands p. 88—103.

^f *Adversus hæreses*, Lib. iii. cap. 3. § 3. p. 176, of the edition which was published at Paris, by Renatus Massuet, 1710, fol.

Eusebius.

42 *The Authenticity of*

Eusebius^s was indeed informed of this second epistle; but he rejects it, because he cannot discover any traces of it among the ancients. Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, in the second century, mentions only one epistle; and both Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, have quoted the first, but never noticed the second, as has been remarked by Grabe^h.—The tenour itself of this fragment betrays, that it is not the work of Clement: for it cites the Gospels often, and by name, which is universally contrary to the custom of the genuine epistleⁱ.

^s Hist. Eccl. Lib. iii. cap. 38. p. 134.—ὁτι μὴ τοὺς ἀρχαίους αὐτῇ κεχρημένους ἴσμεν.

^h In the Spicileg. Patrum et hæreticorum Seculi, 1—3, which was published at Oxford, 1698 and 1700, in 2 vol. in 8vo. Vol. i. p. 266—69.

ⁱ See Lardner's Credibility, vol. ii. p. 49.—The same circumstance makes me suspect the genuineness of the two Syriac epistles, which Wetstein has published at the end of his Greek Testament, and defended as genuine. But the silence of antiquity, and the recommendation of celibacy found therein, compel us absolutely to reject them.

But

But the testimonies of the ancients, for what is called the *first* epistle, are much more numerous and complete*. Besides the passages quoted above, we find in Eusebius, in two different places, very ample information concerning it. In the third book of the Ecclesiastical History, chap. xvi¹. he says—"Of this Clement we have an important and excellent epistle, which is universally received as genuine. He wrote it in the name of the community at Rome to that at Corinth, in which great dissensions at that time existed. This epistle is read, as we know, agreeably to an old custom, in most of the churches. And that such dissensions did actually at that time exist at Corinth, Hegesippus is an incontrovertible evidence." The epistle then which the ancients held to be a genuine work of the Roman Cle-

* It stands in Cotelæus, vol. i. p. 145—181. and in Frey, p. 1—78.

¹ Page 107, 108.

ment,

ment, was written in the name of the community at Rome to the Christians at Corinth, on account of some dissensions which had arisen among them.— In the thirty-eighth chapter of the same book, he points out the contents of that epistle more amply. “In this epistle,” says he^m, “Clement uses many sentiments taken from the Epistle to the Hebrews; he even quotes some word for word: and hence it is manifest, that that Epistle (to the Hebrews) is not a modern composition, but in all probability has been justly placed among the writings of the Apostle (St. Paul). This epistle which St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews in their mother-tongue, was translated, as some assert, by the Evangelist St. Luke; or, according to the opinion of others, by this very Clement; and the latter supposition is the more probable, because the epistle of Clement, and that to the Hebrews, are

written in a similar style, and the sentiments in both works tolerably well harmonise together."

The epistle which we still possess agrees accurately with this description. It is written in the name of the community at Rome to the Christians at Corinth, and to dissuade them from dissensions and factions, and particularly from an opposition to their Presbyters, or Teachers.—The importance and excellence which Eusebius, and the force which Irenæus, in the above-mentioned passage, saw in it, must be ascribed to that inclination of the ancients to consider every thing as beautiful, excellent and forcible, which came from a venerable teacher. The epistle, judged impartially, is written in a tedious style; the author repeats the same subject, probably ten times, without giving it additional force, is rich in unmeaning epithets, wrests scriptural passages to his purpose, and often extends

tends a matter too far, in order to deduce from it an argument which he supposed good and edifying. Notwithstanding these defects, it is one of the most valuable remains of antiquity: Even its great age makes it respectable; for at the latest it was composed in the last ten years of the first century; most probably about the year 96^a. The credit of its author, and particularly the circumstance of its having been written in the name of an entire and very considerable community, add extraordinary weight to its testimony. It thus becomes a public document, and contains not the evidence of a private individual, but of the whole Church at Rome.

We must therefore greatly regret, that it now appears neither sufficiently

^a Formerly I was of the usual opinion, that this epistle was written *before the destruction of Jerusalem*. But Lardner has produced arguments, which appear to me *incontrovertible*, that it must be ascribed to the year 96.—Credibility, vol. ii. p. 23—28.

correct

correct nor perfect. Only a single manuscript of it is come down to us. In this some leaves are wanting; and this defect appears to be in that very part which regards the information on the scriptural books. For in all probability that is wanting which Eusebius, in the above-mentioned passage*, and Irenæus Adv. hæres⁹, have quoted from it.—Eusebius says, that Clement in this epistle, had adopted many sentiments of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and even transcribed some passages. The former are found indeed in the epistle, which still exists, but not the latter: unless we suppose that the words of Eusebius are not to be taken in their most literal meaning. But Irenæus, in proof of the antiquity of the then prevailing doctrine, appeals to this epistle of Clement. “In it,” these are his words, “he delivers the doctrine which he had very lately received from the

* B. iii. ch. 38.

— Lib. iii. cap. 3. § 3. p. 176.

Apostles;

Apostles; viz. that there is one Almighty God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth; who formed man, brought in the deluge, called Abraham, conducted the Jewish people out of Egypt, spake to Moses, gave the law and sent the prophets; who has prepared fire for the devil and his angels; that this God is declared by the Church to be the Father of Jesus Christ, every one who chooses may, see himself from this epistle¹."

¹ The Five Books against Heresies, by Irenæus, are extant at present, except a few fragments preserved by Greek ecclesiastical writers, only in an antient Latin version. In the passage quoted above, the translator uses the word *Scriptura*—"Ex ipsa *Scriptura*, qui velint, discere possunt."—Probably, therefore, the word in the original was *γραφη*. But the translator in the section just preceding, which Eusebius has preserved in the Greek, having rendered the same word by *Epistle*, ought also to have translated it in the same manner here; *ἰσχυρίζεται ἡ ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἐκκλησία γραφὴν ἰκανωτάτην τοῖς Κορινθίοις*, he translates—*Scriptis, quæ est Romæ, ecclesia, potentissimas literas Corinthiis*.—This remark proves how void of foundation is the accusation which is made by the enemies of Christianity, that Irenæus in this place pronounces the epistle of Clement to be (*Scriptura*) a divine Scripture.

All

All this also is wanting in the epistle which has descended to us. Irenæus does not indeed positively assert, (as Mill on Matth. xxv. 41. appears to adopt) that Clement had taken that doctrine from the apostolical writings; he only says, that he had received it from the Apostles. Nevertheless, his information still proves, that *as early as the first century the very same system, in respect to the above-mentioned points, was adopted by the Christians, which we find in our present Scriptures of the New Testament.*—Perhaps Clement had been more copious on this subject, which Irenæus has only quoted in the form of extracts. If this be the case, the loss is of still greater moment.

Clement in this epistle appeals *by name* to an Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, in which he speaks of factions among them; one of which declared Peter, another Apollos, and a

third Paul for their head'. In order to recommend unity and universal love to the Corinthians, he uses a similitude. "Consider," says he, "our bodies. The head is nothing without the feet, so neither the feet without the head. Even the most inconsiderable members are very necessary and useful to the whole body. They all harmonise with, and are subject to, one another, for the preservation of the whole." St. Paul uses ' the very same similitude for the very same purpose.—In the forty-sixth chap. (p. 69) he exhorts them to unity.

^r Ch. xlvii. p. 70.—"Look into the Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle. What has he there written to you in the very beginning, in the beginning of Christianity?" (Thus I render the words, *ἡ ἀρχὴ τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου*, which phrase is commonly used in this sense by the ecclesiastical writers. This must not therefore be understood of a Gospel written by St. Paul; which is also evident from the context.)—"Through the instigation of the Spirit, he admonishes you concerning himself and Peter and Apollos, because that even then you did form parties."

^s Ch. xxxvii. p. 57.

^t 1 Corinth. xii. 12—26.

and love, "because they would otherwise lacerate the members of Christ, and tear them from one another; and would rage against their own bodies, and most senselessly forget, *that we are members one of another.*" St. Paul also, 1 Cor. xii. 27. has employed the same argument.—He makes "a representation of charity, which is taken almost entirely from 1 Cor. xiii. "Charity covers a multitude of sins. It undertakes all work, it bears all with patience. In charity there is no meanness, no pride.—Charity does all things with unity. Through charity the chosen of God are made perfect."—Thus much then is *unquestionable* from the evidence of Clement, that the *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, was actually written by the Apostle *Paul*, in the *first century*.

In the thirty-sixth chapter*, Clement makes the very same comparison

* Ch. xlix. p. 73.

* Page 55, 56.

between Christ and the angels; and uses the very same arguments to prove his divinity, as are found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. i. 3—13. The whole passage deserves to be submitted to the reader, that he may himself judge of its concordance with the above-mentioned part of the Epistle to the Hebrews.—Clement had before said of Jesus, That he alone was the High Priest, through whom God would lead us to the enjoyment of immortal wisdom; “who,” he continues, “is the brightness of his Majesty, (απαυγασμα της μεγαλωσυνης αυτου) and by so much greater than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For so it is written: (Psalm civ. 4.) Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But of his Son, thus said the Lord: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inhe-

inheritance, and the whole earth (*τα
παρατα της γης*) for thy possession. And
again he saith unto him, Sit on my
right hand, until I make thy enemies
thy footstool."—However accurately
this passage may harmonise with the
first chapter of the Epistle to the He-
brews, yet I do not pretend to draw
a conclusion from it for the authenti-
city of that Epistle. Clement might
have derived all these expressions con-
cerning Christ, and these proofs from
the *oral* information of an Apostle. If
the authenticity of the Epistle to the
Hebrews be not yet determined, (which
in this place must necessarily be the
case), then it is equally possible that
the author of this epistle copied from
Clement, as that the latter copied from
the former.

For the same reasons I must judge
in a similar manner of the passages
which nearly resemble those in our
present Gospels of St. Matthew, St.

Mark, and St. Luke.—In the thirteenth chapter* he exhorts the Corinthians to forbearance and brotherly kindness in these words: “Let us especially remember the commands of the Lord Jesus,—for thus he said, Be merciful, so shall ye find mercy. Forgive, so shall it be forgiven unto you. As you do, so shall it be done unto you. As you give, so shall it be given unto you. As you judge, so shall you be judged; as you shew kindness, so shall kindness be shewn unto you. With what measure you mete, with the same it shall be measured unto you.” Similar commands of Jesus actually exist in Matt. vii. 1. and Luke vi. 36—38. But Clement does not once affirm in this passage, that he derived them from any *written* information. He, and also the Corinthians to whom he wrote, might have received them *orally* from the Apostles. —In the same manner he reminds them†

* Page 20.

† Chap. 46. p. 70.

the New Testament.



of another precept of Jesus. "Remember the words of Jesus, who said, Woe to that man; it were better for him, that he had never been born, than that he should offend one of my elect. It were better for him that a millstone should be fastened to him, and that he should be drowned in the sea, than he should offend one of my little ones." This agrees almost verbatim with the discourse of Jesus, in Matthew xviii. 6. Mark ix. 42. Luke xvii. 1, 2.—But it does not therefore follow, that the passages were taken from these *scriptures*. Clement might have known them from *oral information*; or other lives of Jesus might exist from which he selected them; for St. Luke in his Gospel, i. 1. actually declares, that in his time many such lives of Jesus were read among the Christians. From this cause Lardner² also is in doubt, whether he could call

² Credibility, vol. ii. p. 31—33.

these passages testimonies for the historical truth of the books of our New Testament.

Whatever besides is usually quoted from the epistle of Clement for the Authenticity of the New Testament, is of infinitely less value. Some of these sentences agree with our New Testament only in common-place maxims, or indeed only in a word or two.—“Let us come up,” says Clement^a, “to the glorious and venerable rule of our holy calling.” This, it is pretended, is a quotation from the passage, 2 Tim. i. 9. “Who hath called us with an holy calling.”—“Nothing,” says he in another place^b, “is impossible with God, but to lye;” which is pretended to be taken from Heb. vi. 18. where something similar is said of God. We might in this manner prove that Seneca, Plutarch, nay even Socrates and Plato, had quoted the New Testa-

^a Chap. vii. p. 11,

^b Chap. xvii. p. 42,
ment,

ment.—Others, indeed, have a greater resemblance in thought and expression; but they are not therefore *of necessity* taken from our New Testament. Clement might have learnt them through personal intercourse with the Apostles, or have borrowed them from the books of the Old Testament^c, or from other Christian writings^d which then existed.

Dr. Mill,

^c For instance, in the 30th chap. p. 45, he quotes a passage, yet without naming its author.—“For God,” says he, “resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.”—This sentence is found indeed in James iv. 6.; but it stands also in Proverbs iii. 34.

^d The author of what is called the second epistle, is speaking of the wicked, chap. iv. p. 93. and then adds—“Concerning these the Lord has said, Though ye should be joined unto me, even in my very bosom, and keep not my commandments, I would reject you, and say unto you, Depart from me, I know you not, whence you are, you workers of iniquity.”—This passage is evidently similar to that in Matt. vii. 23. Nevertheless, it is not taken thence, but from an *apocryphal* book. In the same manner Clement, when he quotes the discourses or actions of Christ, may have taken them from some other history that was extant when he wrote. For the other historians of the life
of

Dr. Mill, in the Prolegomena to his edition of the New Testament, Num. 140, draws the following inference from this epistle of Clement:—That Clement had read our first three Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle to the Romans, the two Epistles to the Corinthians, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of St. James, and the first Epistle of St. Peter. From such conclusions the most convenient opportunities are afforded to unbelievers, of bringing into discredit the whole body of evidence for the truth of Christianity. I dare not attempt to prove from this ancient document more than—that *our first Epistle to the Corinthians is authentic.*

In reading this venerable work of a teacher, who was an intimate friend of the Apostle Paul, who was also well

of Jesus might have been equally *credible* men, as those whose memoirs are contained in the New Testament, although they did not write, like the latter, from divine inspiration.

acquainted

acquainted with the other Apostles, and had undoubtedly a perfect knowledge of all their doctrines and writings; who even himself presided, at the time of the Apostles, as bishop, over a community to which St. Paul had written one of his longest epistles, many difficulties have very forcibly occurred to me. I will here point them out; perhaps they may excite others to examine this important document with more accuracy. —First: in this short epistle, which occupies about forty small octavo pages, Clement quotes almost fifty passages from the Old Testament, sometimes *word for word*, and sometimes *by name*. It was therefore by no means contrary to the fashion of those days to quote many scriptural passages by way of proof. *Why then does he appeal to the Scriptures of the New Testament so seldom verbally, and only in a single instance by name?* They were all at that time composed, the Revelation

lation of St. John perhaps excepted. For Clement wrote his epistle after the death of the Apostles Paul and Peter*.

—Secondly ; in the xxiv—xxvi. and in the l. chap. p. 39—42, and p. 74, 75, he attempts to prove the resurrection of the dead, and quotes for that purpose many passages from the Old Testament, all of which in fact prove nothing. *Whence is it then, that he quotes not a single one among the great number of far clearer passages in the New Testament, particularly in the first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians?* What could be more decisive to the Corinthians, to whom he wrote, than the determination of the Apostle, who had wrought so many miracles among them, and of whose divine inspiration they had no doubt?

Having frequently made these difficulties the subject of my consideration, it appears to me that much may

* Chap. v. p. 9, 10.

be said to lessen, if not entirely to remove, their force.—As to the first, I answer, That Clement very rarely makes his quotations from the Old Testament by name; but almost constantly only according to their contents. Nor was it very customary for the ancient writers to quote *by name*, as may be seen for instance in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the author quotes generally according to the contents only, or with an indeterminate phrase, “one in a certain place testified.” Moreover, Clement presumed that the contents of the New Testament were already known to the Christians at Corinth. But this he could not presume in respect of the Old Testament, which was generally unknown to the heathen converts.—With regard to the second difficulty, it appears to me that the immediate object of Clement was not so much to prove

^f Chap. i. ii.

the truth of this doctrine of Christianity, as to shew its harmony with the doctrine of the Old Testament, For this reason he quotes, however ill-applied, passages of the Old Testament exclusively, and in such profusion. The doctrine itself he presupposes to be true, and to be believed. The beginning of the 47th chap.—“Receive the Epistle of the Holy Paul; what has he there written to you?” rendered all further quotations of particular passages of this epistle unnecessary.

3. *Hermas.*

WE have an ancient writing under the title of Pastor^s, or Shepherd, which bears the name of Hermas, whom St. Paul, Romans xvi. 14. enumerates among those to whom he particularly sends salutation. It contains, as we have it at present, three books. In the first, which has the title *Visiones*,

^s It stands in Cotelarius, vol. i. p. 75—126.

are

are four visions. The Church of God appears to him four times, in the form of an old woman, gives him various doctrines, (which are very commonplace, and not always just) and particularly informs him, that the Christians had much tribulation to expect, but that they might overcome it by patience and prayer.—After some time appears a venerable man, in the habit of a shepherd, and dictates to him as he writes, twelve commands, which contain a kind of catechetical instruction in morality, very incomplete, and in part bad and unchristian. These are the contents of the second book, which is therefore called *Mandata*.—Again, this venerable man dictates to him certain types, comparisons, and narratives, in which are veiled certain moral truths, and the future fortunes of the church. These compose the third book, which on this account is entitled *Similitudines*.—The work was written originally

nally in Greek. But we have now only an ancient Latin version^b, except a few fragments preserved in the Greek fathers, and which may be seen in Cotelierius.

If we were to form our judgment of the author from the book itself, we should suppose it to have been written by one who was *a Jew by birth*, and who *lived in the first century*. The rigid adherence to facts, and high idea of their meritoriousness¹; the figurative and allegorical kind of representation^k; the quoting of the book *Heldam et Modal*^l; and the Hebrew name given

^b Whoever desires to be further informed concerning the opinions of learned men on these writings of the apostolical period, may consult the first vol. of Le Nourry *Apparatus ad bibliothecam maximam Patrum et antiquorum Scriptorum eccles.* Lugduni edit. in which every thing that belongs to the subject is treated with great accuracy and copiousness. The account of the Pastor is to be found, p. 47—70.

¹ See *Similitud.* V.

^k See the *Visiones* and the *Similitudines*.

^l *Visio.* ii. §. 3. p. 77.—“The Lord is nigh to them
that

given^m to the angel, or, as others explain it, to the frightful beast which appeared to him; these evidently betray a writer, who was educated in the Jewish mode of thinking.—And that it was composed in the first century, is probable from the first book. In this the old woman foretells the fortunes of the church, and indeed in a very mysterious manner. But all her prophecies are so general and indeterminate, that nothing more can be learnt from them than that, “the Christians were to be greatly persecuted.” Now had the author lived later, in the se-

that turn unto him, at it is written in the book of Heldam and Modal, who prophesied to the people in the wilderness.” These are the words of the author himself. The history to which he alludes, is found in Numb. xi. 26, 27. But the Hebrew names of these prophets are Eldad and Medad. In the Synopf. Scripturæ S. which is known under the name of Athanasius, there is a book Heldam and Modal mentioned among the apocryphal writings of the Old Testament.

^m The name in the work itself is Hegrin, *העירין*. See Visio. iv. §. 2. p. 83. & Not. Oxoniens. in loc.

cond, or even third century for instance, he would certainly have made his prophets to give a more determinate and complete description of those persecutions; of the tyrants who should command them; of the cruelties, and modes of torment and death which should hereafter be made use of; and subjects of the like nature. —The author, it may be added, who in the whole composition appears to have been a good, though an ill-informed man, calls himself *Hermas*, and assures his reader, that he wrote it at Rome^a, and at the time when *Clement* was Bishop of that church^b. We perceive, therefore, even without external evidence, that it is extremely probable that this work came from the apostolical *Hermas*. And this is corroborated

^a *Viso. i. §. 1. p. 75.*

^b For in *Viso. ii. §. 4. p. 78.* he receives a command to write two copies of this prophecy, and to send one of them to *Clement*, who would transmit it to the foreign cities.

by the express testimonies of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, and Jerom, who not only inform us, that the apostolical Hermas did really leave us such a book, but they also quote from it many and long passages, and these exactly agreeing with our present copies⁹. We cannot therefore refuse to attribute this book to the above-mentioned writer, without bringing into suspicion the whole of ecclesiastical history.

Eusebius gives us the following information concerning the Pastor, which many in his time supposed to have been written by the apostolical Hermas; "That some believed it to be a very useful book, as an introduction to religion, and that it was therefore read publicly in the churches¹." This opinion agrees very

⁹ These passages are collected together in Cotelierius, vol. i. p. 68—72. where they may be seen all at one view.

¹ Ἐφ' ἱερῶν ἀναγκασιότατον, οἷς μαλιστα δεῖ φοι-
F 2 χήσασθαι

very well with the work which we have at present. Its style is entirely adapted to the senses. The Similitudes in which the writer clothes his instruction, are nothing more than a collection of families, taken from common objects, for instance, from a vine, a green tree, or a flock. This is the case also with the Mandata and Visiões. And thus we in modern times compose books of instruction for children; but indeed with this difference, that it is written in a rough and unpolished style. The whole plan of the book is, if I may use the expression, dramatic; as if adapted to children and beginners. The author does not teach, but relates. The first book is the narrative of his conferences with a venerable matron; and the other two contain the relation of his conversation with a shepherd.

χειωσως εισαγωγικης, κεκριται δθεν ηδη και εν εκκλησιας, ιαμει αυτο διδασκουμενον. Hist. Eccl. Lib. III. cap. iii. p. 90.

These-

These conversations are throughout dramatic. A splendid tower is erected by a variety of artists, and composed of stones of every species. Hermas walks into the country; here his instructor points out now a vine, now a tree just shooting forth its leaves; and, at every prospect, takes occasion to instruct him.—The writer of this book is sometimes represented as an enthusiast who fancied that he saw a variety of visions, and heard revelations. We might with equal justice, on account of the fairy tales in her Magazine for children, call Beaumont a fanatic.

This form in which Hermas has composed his book, did not certainly afford him any opportunity to quote passages from the Bible, as proofs in his system of instruction. Many similar thoughts and expressions have been produced, of which Lardner^r has col-

^r *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 52—65.

lected a great number. But although this work is nearly as large as all the other writings of the apostolical fathers taken together, yet we cannot discover in it any where a single scriptural book cited expressly, and by name.

4. *Ignatius.*

IGNATIUS was Bishop of Antioch; at the command of the Emperour Trajan, because he could not be prevailed on to renounce Christianity, he was conducted to Rome in the year of Christ, 106, in order to fight with wild beasts exhibited at the public games; he remained constant, and was torn to pieces by lions in the amphitheatre. His seven genuine epistles * stand in Cotelarius, vol. ii. p. 11—42, and in Frey's edit. immediately after the epis-

* Besides the Original, which is written in the Greek language, there is extant also an ancient Latin version, which is found in Cotelarius, p. 124—131.

ties of Clement, p. 1—73. These are tolerably well purified^c from modern interpolations. I say tolerably well, for even the smaller edition appears in certain places, to be still suspicious.— In all these epistles, only a *single* book of the New Testament is expressly named by him, which is St. Paul's *Epistle to the Ephesians*. Among the advantages belonging to the Ephesians, which Ignatius notices in his epistle to this community^d, he distinguishes this in particular, *that they had received the knowledge of the mystery of the holy Paul*. “You are,” says he, “fellow-partners in the mystery of the holy Paul—who in his whole Epistle, makes honourable mention of you, as true

^c See Jacobi Usserii dissertationes de Ignatii Epistolis, in Cotelerius, vol. ii. p. 199. seq. but particularly, Joannis Pearsonii Vindiciæ Ignatianæ, ibid. p. 251. sq. and Joan. Clerici. diff. de Ignatii Epistolis; ibid. p. 501. sq. and Prof. Schroeckh's Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii. p. 337. of the Original.

^d §. xii. p. 49.

members of Jesus Christ.” St. Paul names the important doctrine to the publication of which he was peculiarly called, that is, the doctrine of the equal participation of the grace of God through Jesus by the Heathens and Jews, the Mystery, the heretofore unknown doctrine, *μυστηριον* *. On this account Ignatius calls the Ephesians Fellow-partners in the mystery of Paul, (Παυλου συμμυστας) and reminds them of the praises which the Apostle had frequently bestowed on them in his Epistle; that he might thereby excite in them a noble ambition.—We have therefore in this passage an *express evidence for the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians*. For the supposition of the author of the “Letter concerning

* Παυλου συμμυσται του ἡγιασμενου—ἔς ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ μνημονεύει ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. That *μνημονεύειν* sometimes means *to make honourable mention of one* is well known; should a proof of this be required, I refer the reader to Lardner, *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 70.

* Rom. xvi. 25, 26. Ephes. iii. 3—9.

the persons to whom St. Paul wrote what is called the Epistle to the Ephesians¹, that instead of *μνημονεύει* must be read *μνημονεύω*, is a conjecture which not only contradicts (as Lardner has observed on the cited passage) all manuscripts, but destroys also the whole connection of the twelfth section.

In the epistle to the Philadelphians², he gives them as it were an account of the sources from which he had drawn his faith. "I flee to the Gospel, as to the body of Christ; and to the Apostles, as to the presbytery of the church. Let us also respect the Prophets; for they likewise published to men, that they should ground their hope on the Gospel and on Jesus, and expect his coming³." Every one will acknowledge that

¹ See Benson's History of the first planting of the Christian religion.

² §. v. p. 48, 49.

³ Προσφυγὴ τῇ εὐαγγελίῳ, ὡς σαρκὶ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, ὡς πρεσβυτερίῳ τῆς ἐκκλησίας. Καὶ τοὺς προφῆτας δι' ἀγαπῶμαι, διὰ τὸ καὶ αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

that by 'the Prophets,' Ignatius means the writings of the Prophets of the Old Testament. Without doubt then he understands by 'the Gospel,' the writings of the Evangelists; and by 'the Apostles,' the writings of the Apostles. — Again, when he warns them ^b against a love of disputation, and exhorts them to act in all things according to the doctrine of Christ, he represents to them his own example. "Hearing some persons declare," said he,

εὐαγγέλιον κατηγγέλειναι καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἐλπίζειν, καὶ αὐτὸν ἀναμένειν.—Commentators have given a variety of opinions to account for Ignatius calling the Gospel *εὐαγγέλιον*. This appears to me to be the most natural cause, because it promulgates the accomplishment of the promises of the Old Testament. These are generally called the *shadow*, and Christ the *substance*, or *body*. Or this may be the reason, as Le Clerc has remarked on the passage, that he put as much confidence in the contents of the Gospel, as if Jesus were still alive, and assured him of its truth.—The last words are obscure in the way they are usually rendered. The translation given above appears to me to convey the true sense of the author.

^b §. viii. p. 51, 52.

he, "I believe nothing but what I find in the ancients, (or, according to another reading, the archives) viz. in the Gospel, I answered, but it is there written. And thereby I brought them to acknowledge that they would believe." — From these passages thus

c I will subjoin this difficult passage, on which the commentators are so much at variance, in order that the reader may, without further trouble, examine the translation which I have given above. Επει μινουσαντων λεγοντων οτι εαν μη ει τοις αρχαιοις, (or, according to a different reading, αρχαιοις) ευρω, ει τη ευαγγελιω, ε πιστευω. Και λεγοντας μου αυτοις, ετι γεγραπται, απειριθησαν μοι, οτι προκειται. Ignatius, in the preceding sixth section, had exhorted the Philadelphians to beware of those, who produced every kind of Jewish tenet, but were absolutely silent concerning Jesus Christ. I translate therefore the last words ετι προκειται, *Itaque propositum est*, namely, credere; and understand the passage in this manner, that in their disputations they should trust exclusively to the decisions of the Gospel, and endeavour to convince their opponents therefrom with all gentleness.—A similar passage is found in Epictetus, in Arriani dissertation. Epict. Lib. iv. cap. 3. edit. Joan. Uptoni, tom. i. p. 399. He had taught in the preceding part, "that we should constantly live agreeably to nature," and adds, Τουτο γαρ εστι, ε και προκειται τη καλη και αγαθη.

much

much is clear, that in the time of Ignatius there existed certain writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, formed into a *collection*. Their nature and number however is uncertain, since he has given us no catalogue of them.

In these epistles are also many sentiments and expressions, which appear to have been borrowed from the Scriptures of our New Testament.—In the epistle to the community at Smyrna^d, Ignatius says of Jesus, “That he was according to the flesh, truly of the family of David, and a son of God, according to the will and power of^e God.” St. Paul speaks of him almost in the same manner, Rom. i. 3, 4.—To the Ephesians * he writes, “The cross of Christ is a stumbling block unto unbelievers; but to us salvation and eternal life. Where is now the wise, and the profound inquirer? Where is the boasting of them that are called learned?”

^d §. i. p. 2.

^e §. xviii. p. 32.

St. Paul makes the same remark on the evangelical doctrine, 1 Cor. i. 18—31. —Ignatius exhorts the Magnesians in almost the very words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. v. 7. 8. “Cast away the evil leaven, which is become old and sour; and be transformed into a new mass, which is Christ ^f.”—In the epistle to Polycarp^g, he recommends that he should exhort the men “to love their wives, even as Christ loves his church.” This excellent command is found in Eph. v. 25. —The many other passages in which the New Testament is said to have been quoted^h, have either only a very distant similitudeⁱ, or are evidently different^k.

Ignatius may therefore be produced as a clear evidence for *the Epistle of*

^f §. x. p. 42.

^g §. v. p. 16.

^h See Lardner's *Credibility of the G. H.* vol. ii. p. 70—85.

ⁱ As for example, in Lardner, Numb. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 13, 17, 18, 27, 31, 36, 38, 42.

^k See Lardner, Numb. 43.

St. Paul to the Ephesians, and that in his time existed a *collection of evangelical and apostolical writings*;—we may also with probability conclude from his Epistle, that the *Epistle to the Romans*, and the *first Epistle to the Corinthians*, were at that period already written.

5. *Polycarp.*

POLYCARP was an *immediate disciple* of St. John the Apostle, by whom he was also appointed to the bishoprick of Smyrna¹. According to the information of Irenæus², he left behind him various writings. But none of them are come down to us except his epistle to the Philippians; and even this is no longer entire in the Greek original³.

In

¹ See Irenæus, Lib. iii. cap. 3. §. 4. Eusebius, Lib. iii. cap. 36. p. 130. and Hieronymus *De vir. illustr.* cap. 13.

² In Eusebius, Lib. v. cap. 20.

³ It stands in Cotelierius, vol. ii. p. 186—189; and the old Latin version, which contains the entire epistle, p. 190

In this work he testifies *expressly*, that St. Paul had written *an Epistle to the Philippians*, in which he strengthened their faith, hope, and love towards God, Christ and their neighbour. "Paul," says he *, "not only preached in person to you the true doctrine, but also when absent wrote epistles to you, by the study of which you will be able to edify yourselves in the faith which has been delivered to you." And in another place † he expresses his astonishment at the covetousness of Valens, one of their presbyters. "But," he adds, "I have never observed, nor ever heard the same of you, among whom Paul preached. On the contrary, he

p. 190—191. Both may be seen in the Edit. of Frey, p. 143—161.—The testimonies of the above-mentioned authors, and the passages cited by them, place the authenticity of this epistle beyond all doubt.—If the fragments, which are called *Responsiones*, (in Cotel. l. cit. p. 205. 6. and in Frey, p. 162—164) were the genuine production of Polycarp, they might be considered as an evident testimony for the authenticity of the four Gospels.

* §. iii. p. 146. 47.

† §. ix. p. 150.

makes

makes mention of you in the beginning of his Epistle, and boasts of you in all communities¹.”—He cites also expressly, although not by name, a passage from *St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians*, vi. 2. *An nescimus quia sancti mundum judicabunt? sicut Paulus docet*².—In like manner he appeals to the command which stands in *the Holy Scriptures*, “Be ye angry in such a manner that ye do not sin; and let not the sun go down upon your wrath³.” *Confido, vos bene exercitatos esse in Sacris litteris. — Ut his scripturis dictum est, Irascimini et nolite peccare; et sol non occidat super*

¹ See Philipp. i. 3—5. In the former of these two passages the Plural number stands in the Greek, ὡς—*συμφωνησάμενοι*. But it is by no means uncommon to use this word in the plural number, although only a single epistle is meant. Comp. Cotelerii not. in loc.—Lardner supposes that Polycarp in this place intended not only the Epistle to the Philippians, but also both the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians. *Credibility*, vol. iii. p. 91. 2.

² §. xi. p. 159.

³ §. xii. p. 159.

iracundiam

iracundiam vestram. Now since the passage, as here quoted, does not exist in any part of the Old Testament, but is found exclusively in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians, iv. 26, this sentence may therefore be considered as an evidence, that the *Epistle to the Ephesians* was already esteemed at that time as a *divine Scripture*.

This epistle of Polycarp is throughout moral, and contains a variety of ethical maxims, delivered almost in the same words which we find in the Scriptures of our New Testament.—“Remember” says he, “what the Lord taught, Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven; be merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; with the same measure that ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Further, “Blessed are the poor, and they that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the

* §. ii. p. 145, 146.

kingdom of God." Passages of similar import are found in St. Matthew, v. 3. 7. 10. vii. 1, 2. St. Luke, vi. 20. 37, 38.—"We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, in order that every one may give an account of himself." This also is found in the same words, Rom. xiv. 10. 12.—He warns them "against covetousness with the very same arguments and expressions as are found in 1 Tim. vi. 7, 10. "The love of money is the root of all evil. Let us therefore well consider, that as we brought nothing into the world, so can we carry with us nothing out."—In this work of Polycarp we meet besides with many sentiments in exactly the same dress in which they exist in the first Epistle of St. Peter; which has also been remarked by Eusebius². That I may not be too prolix,

¹ §. vi. p. 150.

² §. iv. p. 147.

³ Hist. Eccl. Lib. XV. cap. xiv. p. 162. Πολυ-

καρπος

prolix, I will mention only the passages below.—From these passages alone, we cannot indeed conclude, that he has taken them from the undermentioned books of the New Testament²; but when joined with the numerous and clear evidences which will be produced in the following pages, they greatly corroborate the proof of the Authenticity of the New Testament.

SECT. III.

Testimonies from Works of the first Century, which are now lost.

TO these evidences of the apostolical fathers, we are enabled to add

μαρτος εν τη δαλωση προς φιδωπησιους αυτου γραφη
φερμενη εις δυο, κεχρηται. τισι μαρτυριαι απο της
Πετρου προτερας επιτελες.

² Compare §. i. p. 144. with 1 Pet. i. 8.—§. ii. p. 145. with 1 Pet. i. 21.—§. ii. latter part, with 1 Pet. iii. 9.—And, §. v. p. 149. with 1 Pet. ii. 22.

³ See above, p. 32.

yet some others from the first century. The writings themselves are indeed, to the great loss of Christianity, no longer extant; but the following evidences from them have been preserved in part by Eusebius.

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, was, according to Eusebius*, a man of very moderate understanding, but who employed so much the greater care in examining into the doctrines and history of Jesus and of his Apostles, from their immediate acquaintance and disciples. He had collected considerable information, particularly from Aristion, and John the Presbyter, [whom some

* Hist. Eccles. III. cap. xxxix. p. 135. 38. In this place, Eusebius treats amply of the history and writings of Papias. The decision which he makes in p. 137, σφοδρα — — σμικρος ων τον ιου, ως αν εκ των αυτου λαγων τεκμηραιμενοι εισιν φαινεται, must not be considered as a contradiction of the passage in Lib. III. cap. xxvi. p. 130. For the opinion which is found there, Πάπιας, — — — — — ανηρ τα πάντα οτι μαλιστα λογιωτατος και της γραφης ιδωνων, is the interpolation of a Scholiast. See Valesius in loc.

conceived

conceived to be the author of the Apocalypse] which information he delivered to posterity, under the title, *λογων κυριακων εξηγησις*, An Explication of the words of the Lord. But of this work nothing now remains, except the extracts which are preserved in Eusebius.

The information, properly belonging to the New Testament, which was contained in that book, is given us by Eusebius^b, in the following words:—

“ Mark, the interpreter of Peter, faithfully wrote what the latter had taught. He has not indeed placed the discourses and actions of Christ in their proper chronological order; for he was neither a hearer of the Lord himself, nor one of his immediate followers; but, as I have already mentioned, became afterwards acquainted with Peter, who taught according to the wants of his hearers, but without

^b Page 137, 138.

irrefragable evidence for the *Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, the first Epistle of St. Peter and the first Epistle of St. John*. But if St. Mathew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, (or as we call it, Chaldee) which hence appears to be manifest, yet it is equally certain from other grounds that he composed it likewise in Greek. The Christians in Palestine used the Hebrew original; added to it many things taken from other gospels, genuine and spurious; and this is that anciently celebrated

κυριου, ουτε παρεκολουθησιν αυτη· υστερον δε ως εφη, Πιτρω, ος προς τας χρειας ποιειτο τας διδασκαλιας, αλλ' ουχ' ως περ συνταξιν των Κυριακων ποιουμενος λογων· ωτε ουδιν ημαρτι Μαρκης, ουτως ενια γραφας ως απιμνημονυσιν· ινος γαρ ποιησεται προοιαι, του μηδεν αν ηκουσι παραλιπειν η ψευσασθαι τι εν αυτοις· ταυτα μιν ουι ιγोरηται τη Παπια περι του Μαρκου· περι δε του Ματθαιου τωσ' ειρηται· Ματθαιος μιν ους Εβραιδ' διαλεκτη τα λογια συνεγραψατο· ηρμηνευσα δ' αυτα ως ιδυατο ικατος· κικρηται δ' αυτος μαρτυριας απο της Ιωαννου προτερας επισολης, και της Πιτρου ερωτης· εκτιθιται δε και αλλη ιγοριαν περι γυναικας, επι πολλαις αμαρτιας διαβληθεις, επι του κυριου, ης το καθ' Εβραιους Ευαγγελιον περιεχει.

Gospel of the Hebrews, or as it is likewise named, of the Nazarines⁴.

In case Papias had advanced in his book still further evidences of a similar nature, and we have reason to suppose that he did so, Eusebius would have rendered great service to posterity if he had extracted them: But it is much to be lamented that he often excerpts the old writers not so completely as scholars must desire. In the Thirty-sixth Chapter of the Third Book of his Eccl. Hist. (p. 133,) in which he continues his account of the Christian teachers in the reign of Trajan, he says that many of them left their native country, and exercised the office of Evangelists, zealously announcing Christ to those who had yet heard nothing of the preaching of faith, and delivering to them the scripture of the

⁴ See Fabricii Cod. apocr. N. T. I. 355.

divine

divine Gospels*. Eusebius, a man of an integrity universally acknowledged, assures us, that he drew his information from the documents of antiquity which he found in the library at Cæsarea. We are therefore certain, that *as early as the beginning of the second century, the four Gospels, which were received in Eusebius's time, i. e. the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John, were universally known among the Christians; and not only esteemed as genuine writings of the men above-mentioned; but also as of divine inspiration.*



CHAP. II.

Witnesses in the Second Century.

IN the second century the evidences for the Scriptures of the New Testament

* Και γὰρ ἡ πλειοψηφία τῶν τότε μαθητῶν, σφοδρῶς φιλοσοφίας ἕνεκα, πρὸς τοὺς θείους λόγους τὴν ψυχὴν πλεττομένην,

ment are far more numerous, determinate, and ample, because we still possess more and larger works of the teachers of this period. I shall not therefore stop to quote the passages themselves, but only name the witnesses, and point out those parts of their writings, where their evidence is to be found. But I will first describe the state of Christianity in the second and third centuries.

SECT. I.

State of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries.

IN the East, (namely in Palestine, Chaldea, and Persia,) where Chris-

πληττομενοι, την Σωτηριον προτιρον απεπληρουν παρα-
 κειλευσιν, ενδιδουσι νιμοντις τας ουσιαις. επιτα δε απο-
 θεμιας γελλομενοι, εργον επιτελουσι ευαγγελισται, τοις
 ενι παντα ανηκοις του της πισweis λογου κηρυττειν
 του Χριστου φιλοτιμουμενοι, και την τω θειω ευαγγελιω
 παραδιδουσαν γραφην.

tianity received its origin, at that time prevailed a mixture of opinions, for the most part false, but which bore the venerable name of Philosophy, and had been for a long time embraced by many even at Alexandria, which city, since the Ptolomies, was become the chief seat of learning. This Oriental Philosophy (we will admit the honourable appellation for the sake of brevity) was distinguished from the Grecian, principally in three points, viz. in the doctrine of spirits; the maintaining of two original-beings; and in morality.—In the doctrine of spirits these philosophers had not only regular genealogies of spirits, which they called *Æons*; but had also invented a particular science, *Theurgy*, or a collection of rules, to call up spirits and compel them to satisfy the desires of men. Again, in order to solve that great problem of the understanding, The origin of evil, they adopted two equally eternal

eternal and powerful original-beings, one good, the other bad. From the bad was derived all matter, consequently the bodies of men, which were therefore the seat of every sin. And from this principle flowed the whole of that gloomy, morose, melancholy system of morals adopted by the philosophers of the East; which placed true virtue in the rejection of all the pleasures of sense, and in the severe treatment, mortification, and torture of the body^f.

These

^f See—1. The information contained in Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, and Diogenes Laertius Proem. vitar. philos. §. viii.—2. The fragments of Zoroaster in Eusebii Præparat. evangel.—3. The doctrines of the Bramins.—4. The refutations in St. Paul.—And 5. The doctrines of the Gnostics and Manicheans. Compare Moshemii Instit. H. E. majores, sec. i. 136. 339. with Dissert. de causis suppositorum librorum inter Christian. sec. i. et ii. vol. i. dissert. in H. E. p. 223 seq. But the learned and ingenious man, who every where perceived *systems*, which his philosophical head had created, appears absolutely to err, when he supposes, that in the East existed a peculiar sect, which had brought *all* those tenets into a regular system. It

These opinions were likewise not uncommon among the Jews, as may be collected from the refutations of them in the New Testament, and from the writings of Josephus. The Pharisees laid a great stress on Theurgy; and through the exercise of this visionary art, they obtained a great part of their consequence among the people. The Essenes in particular adopted the whole system.

This oriental philosophy insinuated itself by degrees also among the followers of the Grecian systems. Of these none had been so generally received as that of Plato, which was in most parts excellent. But it became gradually much changed and corrupted not only through ignorance, misunderstanding, and innovation; but also by being intermixed, particularly by

is more probable that there existed a variety of sects, which occasionally adopted different doctrines.

Plotinus

Plotinus of Alexandria⁸ a Platonist of the third century; with the oriental systems. Thus arose the New-platonic philosophy; a mixture of the platonic, but very much corrupted; and of the oriental philosophy: and this became the principal source from which were derived the perversions, mutilations, and most abominable corruptions of genuine Christianity.

For until the second century, the Christians always persisted in the sound exposition of the New Testament. To this period they continued free, if we except the joyless morality of the Essenes, from the distractions of pseudo-

⁸ Plotinus, a disciple of Ammonius Saccas, travelled into Persia, purposely to learn the doctrines of the Indians and Persians. He was the master of the celebrated philosopher and enemy of Christianity, Porphyry; who also edited his works. Mosheim too much indulges his wit here also, as has been remarked and proved by Semler, Walch, and others. Prof. Meiners has treated this subject very amply in his '*Considerations on the New-Platonic Philosophy*.' Leipzig, 1782, 8vo.

philosophy;

philosophy; and maintained among themselves genuine apostolical Christianity. But scarcely had some of the scholars of the heathen world (for instance Clement of Alexandria) acknowledged Christianity, when the pseudo-philosophy of the Easterns and New-platonists, broke in like a rapid torrent, and left behind universal desolation. Until this time the doctrines of the Christian religion had been preached without exception, and with the greatest publicity to all who would hear them, and, as the founder of Christianity expressed himself in his charge to the Apostles^b, "from the house tops." But now, in resemblance of the heathen mysteries, certain ceremonies and doctrines began to be concealed, and thus Christianity assumed its mysteries as well as heathenism. Besides, a variety of heathen ceremonies were adopted in the divine service, and

^b Matthew x.

hence

hence Christianity became gradually a ceremonial religion. Since Origen (in the third century) this system of religion, which commands in a particular manner the strictest adherence to truth, was perverted so much, that it was declared a duty of charity to forge miracles, and in short, every thing else, if by these means converts might be made to their religion; nay, this was carried to such a pitch of shameless effrontery, that these infamous forgeries were named, pious deceptions, *piæ fraudes*. The zealous supporters of the new-platonic philosophy intermixed their system, even that part of it which is called platonic love, with Christianity. Socrates and Plato defended the most intimate union of men with beautiful boys, in such a manner, that they made a distinction between corporeal and spiritual love; and asserted, that the wise man feels only the latter in respect to the beauty of the boy,

boy, in order to conduct him to virtue. Hence arose in the third century that most infamous custom for persons of the opposite sexes, without being united in the bonds of marriage, to live with one another in the closest intimacy; in order, as they pretended, to establish a mere union of souls for the purposes of virtue. But the most injurious effects, and the almost mortal blow which Christianity received from that pseudo-philosophy of the easterns, and more especially of the new-platonists, was the utter neglect, mutilation, and subversion of morals; together with the mystical mode of interpreting the New Testament. The simple and perspicuous system of morality which Christianity taught, was too light for these pretended philosophers; it afforded too little matter for their fancies and speculations. It became therefore neglected, and since the third century the whole importance

was made to consist in the theory of Christianity, or rather, of the oriental-platonic Christianity. But the matter did not rest even here; the religion became burthened with the above mentioned theurgy, and corporeal mortification; and through the assistance of mystical and ridiculous interpretations, every error and every impurity which the passions or caprice of men desired, were introduced into the New Testament. In this manner that easy, beautiful, immediately and universally active, chearful, and philanthropic religious-system of the New Testament, became during the second and more particularly the third century, a gloomy, harsh, misanthropic system of whims, fancies, monkery, deceit, and hierarchical tyranny.

To these dreadful calamities from within were added also from without incessant persecutions, which were often general, and sometimes extremely bloody

bloody and cruel. Even the worthy Trajan, and yet the more excellent Marcus Antoninus, tortured and put to death many of their most faithful subjects only because they were not idolaters, but chose to live according to those laws of Christianity, which even the heathens themselves acknowledged to be irreproachable and excellent¹. But the most horrible of all these persecutions began to rage against the Christians about the year 249. The Emperor Decius proceeded so far as to attempt to exterminate Christianity by the roots. By his orders the Christians were not only put to death, but were also afflicted with the most exquisite tortures. A Christian, for instance, had his whole body smeared with honey, and then, his hands tied behind his back, exposed quite naked to the meridian sun, where myriads of insects

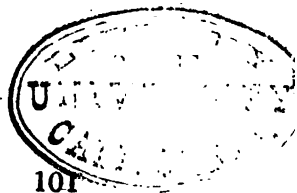
¹ Let the reader consult, for instance, Plinii Epist. 97. Lib. x.

affailed him, and consumed his body by insensible degrees^k.

Nevertheless, this religion was continually extending itself in all the parts of the then known world. In Gaul there already existed flourishing communities at Lyons and Vienne; in Germany; in Britain; in Africa, and every where the number of the Christians so increased, that even in the beginning of the second century the heathens complained that the temples of the gods were quite deserted; and towards the end of the third, the court and army of the heathen Emperours were filled with persons of this persuasion. —This extensive propagation of Christianity was undoubtedly the consequence of the continually increasing promulgation of the Scriptures of the New Testament. As early as the beginning of the second century were

^k See Schroeckh's Ecclesiastical Hist. IV. 190. of the original.

made



made Latin and Syriac versions. Learned men, (particularly Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and his scholar Pierius), were anxious to have accurate transcripts of the original; and opulent men, (especially Pamphilus), caused at a great expence many exact copies of it to be taken and dispersed¹.—We will now hear the individual witnesses themselves.

1. *Justin Martyr.*

JUSTIN, surnamed the Martyr, before his conversion to the Christian faith, had carefully studied the Stoic, Peripatetic, Pythagorean, and Platonic systems of philosophy; and must therefore be considered, on account of his learning and antiquity, as a witness of the greatest importance^m. It is necessary

¹ See Prof. Schroeckh's Ecclesiastical Hist. Part i.—iv. and C. R. Walch, On the use of the Holy Scripture among the ancient Christians—Leipzig, 1779, 8vo.

^m Concerning the circumstances of his life, principles,

cessary to read only his 'Address to the Gentiles,' (λογος προς Έλληνας, pag. 1—3), 'The Exhortation to the Gentiles,' (λογος παραινετικος προς Έλληνας, p. 6—36), and the work 'On the only God,' (περι μοναρχιας, p. 36—42), in order to be convinced of his extensive reading in the best writings of antiquity. These works of Justin prove incontestibly that the first followers of Christianity were not by any means such as its enemies assert, universally

and writings, the most accurate and ample information is to be found in the Preface to the Benedictine Edit. of his works, Haag, 1742, fol. Besides the genuine and spurious works of Justin, this edition contains also—Tatian's Oration against the Gentiles, p. 241—276.—Athenagoras's Apology for the Christians, p. 277—313.—And, his Treatise on the Resurrection of the Dead, p. 314—336.—The three books of Theophilus of Antioch to Autolycus, p. 337—400.—The Satire of Hermas on the Heathen Philosophers, p. 401—406.—And the fragments of the lost writings of Justin, Tatian, and Athenagoras; together with the Acts of the Martyrdom of Justin, p. 585 and fol.—His first Apology is a well written defence of the Christians against the calumniations of the Gentiles.

unlearned and simple men. Justin was much better acquainted with the works and opinions of Plato, Aristotle, and Pythagoras, and with the writings of Orpheus, Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, than most of those who are pleased to assert that the heathen authors are the only sources of all wisdom, but the followers of Jesus universally mean and simple men.

Besides the *Revelation of St. John*^a, Justin has not quoted in any part of his works from a single writer of the

^a Dialogus cum Tryphone, cap. lxxii. page 179.

Και παρ' ἡμῖν ἀνὴρ τις, ὃ ὄνομα Ἰωάννης, εἰς τῶν ἀποστόλων τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐν Ἀποκαλύψει γινόμενῃ αὐτῷ, Χίλια ἐτη ποιήσει· ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ τοὺς τῷ ἡμετέρῳ Χριστῷ πιστεύσαντας προφητεύσει, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα τὴν καθολικὴν καὶ — — αἰωνίαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἅμα πάντων ἀναστᾶσιν· γίνεσθαι καὶ κρίσιν· 'A man from among us, whose name was John, and an Apostle of Christ, has prophesied in his Revelation, that they who believe in our Christ, shall live a thousand years in Jerusalem; and after that shall follow the universal and eternal resurrection and judgment.'

New Testament *by name*. But he appeals often and expressly to the Gospels, which were composed by the Apostles and their assistants, as to those books from which the Christians derived their tenets.—In his first apology (presented to the Emperour Antoninus the Pious) he gives this reason for the celebration of the Lord's Supper among the Christians^o: "for the Apostles in the memoirs which are named Gospels, have thus assured us, that Jesus ordered them to do it; That he took bread, gave thanks, and

^o Apolog I. cap. lxvi. page 83.—See also Dialog. cum Tryphone Judæo, cap. ciii. p. 199. *Εν τοις απομνημονευμασι των αποστολων γιγραπται, προσελθων (namely σατανας) αυτη (Christ) και πειραζων μεχρι του ειπει αυτη, προσκυνησον μοι, και αποκρινασθαι αυτη τον Χριστον, υπαγει οπισω μου σατανα· Κυριον τον Θεον σου προσκυνησεις και αυτη μονη λατρευσεις.—* And in the same place: *Εν τοις απομνημονευμασι αφημι υπο των αποστολων αυτου και των εκεινους παρ ακολουθησαντων συντεταχθαι, οτι ιδως ωσει θεομβοι κατεχειτο, αυτου ευχομενου και λιγοτος, παρελθων, ει δυνατοι, το ποτηριον ταυτο:*

then

then said, This do in remembrance of me: This is my body: That in like manner he took the cup, and after he had given thanks, said, This is my blood." And in his advice concerning the behaviour of the Christians at their Sunday meetings, he mentions even, "that the memoirs of the Apostles, or the writings of the Prophets, are publicly read; and when the reader has ended, the president of the community exhorts them to the imitation of such excellent things^p." An evident proof, that *as early as the beginning of the second century* the Gospels were not only generally known among the Christians, but were revered, even as the Scriptures of the

^p Apologia I. cap. lxvii. p. 83. Καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου λογομηνῇ ἡμέρᾳ, πάντων κατὰ πόλεις ἡ ἀγροὺς μενομένων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσις γίνεται, καὶ τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων, ἢ τὰ συγγραμματα τῶν προφητῶν ἀναγιγνώσκονται μέχρις ἐγχευρί· εἰτα παύσασθαι τοῦ ἀναγιγνώσκοντος, ὃ πρὸς τῷ δια λόγου τὴν νοῦθεσίαν καὶ προκλήσιν τῆς τῶν καλῶν τούτων μνήμης ποιεῖται.

Old

Old Testament, that is, as *divine books*.

The view with which Justin composed his works did not allow him to use the Scriptures of the New Testament by way of proof. We find, nevertheless, where opportunities occur, a variety of passages, and these quoted with the addition that they were to be found in the *Christian Scriptures*. Thus, in the 'First Apology,' in which he speaks of the excellent laws of Jesus, and the virtuous actions of the Christians¹, of their hope of a future resurrection², and of their customary mode of Baptism and of Supper of the Lord³,—and likewise in the 'Dialogue with Trypho', when he treats of the prophecies which Jesus had pronounced⁴, of John

¹ Apolog. I. cap. xv—xvii. p. 52—54.

² Apolog. I. cap. xix. p. 55.

³ Apolog. I. cap. lxi—lxvii. p. 79—84.

⁴ Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. xxxv. p. 132. cap. lxxvi.

p. 137. cap. cvii. p. 201.

the

the Baptist", of the morality which Jesus taught", of Mary the mother of Jesus*, and of the insults offered to the dying Saviour',—many passages are quoted from St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, *word for word*. And the whole 'Dialogue with Trypho' is, in particular, a repetition of the history of the life of Jesus, as it appears at present in our Gospels. In this work Justin compares the circumstances in the life of Jesus with the characters attributed to the Messiah in the Old Testament, and concludes, from their having been exactly fulfilled in him, that he was the Messiah promised by God.

* Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. xlix. p. 145. cap. li. p. 147. cap. lxxxviii. p. 186.

† Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. xciii. p. 190.

‡ Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. c. p. 196.

§ Dialog. cum Tryph. cap. ci. p. 196.

2. Tatian.

TATIAN, the father of the Encratites, shews himself in his 'Oration against the Gentiles'², to have been a man, who, from his travels, had become intimately acquainted with the world; and from reading, familiar with the best writers and with the history of the Gentiles. In this Oration he informs the Gentiles how little reason they had to boast of their philosophers and of their wisdom; and presses them with very pointed reproofs drawn from their own writings, laws, actions, and manners. In a work of this kind we can easily suppose, that the author had no opportunity of quoting the Scriptures of the New Testament; and we therefore find, in *two passages* ex-

² See above, p. 101, note m.—The Preface there noticed, gives ample information concerning his life, writings, and opinions.

cepted,

cepted*, that they are never once mentioned.—But this witness had deposed so much the more in favour of their authenticity in his other writings, which are now lost, except a few fragments preserved by different authors.—I shall produce him again, at the conclusion of this century, among the remaining witnesses, whose testimonies are known to us only through the information of others.

3. *Irenæus.*

IRENÆUS, Bishop of Lyons, had not only lived very near the times of the Apostles, but had enjoyed familiar intercourse with one of their imme-

* Cap. xiii. p. 255. and cap. xix. p. 261. In the first passage he asserts, that the soul is καθ' ἑαυτῆς σκοτος, και ουδεν εν αὐτῇ φωτειναι; (how this is to be understood is explained by the editor, in the Preface, Part. II. cap. xi. §. iii. p. 49.—51.)—and then adds, και τουτο εστιν αρα το κρημινον* ἡ σκοτια το φως ου καταλαμβάνει (John i. 5).—In the other passage he quotes John i. 3. with these words, παντα ἐπ' αὐτου, και χωρις αὐτου γιγνεται ουδεν εν.

diate

diate disciples and friends^b. In his five books *Against Heresies*, he delivers very ample and clear testimonies for the historical truth of the Scriptures of the New Testament.—He quotes *all the Evangelists* often, and *by name*; relates the cause and design of their writings; and declares that there were *only four* Gospels, viz. those of St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, which were accounted genuine and divine books^c.

In

^b In the above-mentioned edition of his Works by Massuet, very copious information is given concerning his life, opinions, and writings, in the prefixed *Dissertationes præv. ad Irenæum*.—He left many works, which are named by Eusebius and Jerom. But of these, if we except a few fragments, nothing is now remaining besides his *Libri quinque adversus hæreses*. Even these have not come down to us in the Greek original, but are extant only in an ancient Latin version.—The authenticity of this work has been amply proved by C. R. Walch; see Rössler's *Ecclesiastical Fathers*, v. 264—270.

^c The most particular passages are, Lib. III. cap. i. p. 174. and cap. ii. p. 190—192. That he makes use

In opposition to the Valentinians, he proves by many passages from the Gospels of St. Matthew^d, St. Mark^e, St. Luke^f, and St. John^g, and also from the Acts of the Apostles by St. Luke^h, that there is but one God the creator and preserver of all things.—To the writings of St. Paul he appeals yet more frequently. He proves his tenets against the heretics most commonly from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, the two Epistles to the Corinthians, the Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, those

use of such strange arguments, from the four winds, &c. by way of proof, is of no consequence to us in the present inquiry. It is sufficient, that he expressly asserts that in his time *no other* Gospels, but the *four above-mentioned*, were received among Christians.

^d L. cit. cap. ix. p. 184, 185.

^e L. cit. cap. x. p. 185—88.

^f Ibid.

^g L. cit. cap. xi. p. 188—90.

^h L. cit. cap. xii. p. 193—98.

to Timothy, and the Epistle to Titus. He asserts in many places that these *twelve Epistles* were the *genuine and divine works* of *St. Paul*¹; makes numerous and sometimes long extracts from them, evidently proving to every reader, that they are the very same which we at this time possess in the New Testament^k. In like manner he testifies also the authenticity of the *first Epistle of St. Peter*^l; the *first and second Epistles of St. John*^m; and the *Revelation of the same Apostle*ⁿ.

He

¹ For, in his quotations he makes use of the following phrases:—‘Paul has this in his Epistle to the Romans,’ Lib. III. cap. xvi. p. 205.—‘Paul shews this in his first—or—second Epistle to the Corinthians,’ Lib. III. cap. vii. p. 182. Lib. IV. cap. xxvii. p. 264. He uses these or similar forms of quotation for every one of the above mentioned epistles.

^k Lardner has collected proofs thereof in his ‘Credibility of the G. H.’ vol. ii. p. 157—169.

^l He quotes this epistle also, with the same introductory phrase—‘Peter says in his epistle.’—Lib. IV. cap. ix. p. 238.

^m See Lib. III. cap. xvi. p. 206, and *ibid.* p. 207.

ⁿ See particularly, Lib. V. cap. xxvi.—*finem libri*,

He asserts that these writings were divine, and the sure foundation of the Christian faith*. What his opinion of the other books of the New Testament was, we cannot, from his silence, determine. He appears to have considered the Epistle to the Hebrews as neither the work of St. Paul, nor a divine book*.—This is a proof, that the first Christians were not so credulous as modern infidels represent them. Had they received all at random, without examination, then certainly they would not have rejected so universally the apocryphal writings, and hesitated to acknowledge the authenticity of some of the books of the New Testament.

p. 323—337, where he proves the Destruction of the Roman Monarchy, the Wickedness of Antichrist, and the millenary kingdom about to take place before the universal judgment, from the Revelation of St. John.

* See Lib. III. cap. i. p. 174. Lib. II. cap. xxviii. p. 156.

† See Lardner's Credibility of the G. H. vol. ii. p. 164—166.

In his time collections¹ of the evangelical and apostolical writings were already in the hands of many Christians. They were diligently studied; and in order that those who were not opulent might not be deceived by any corrupted copies, he advised them to apply to the teachers of the church.—“All the divine scriptures,” says he², “both prophecies and gospels are open and clear, and may be consulted by all.”—And in another place³, “That man will easily convince himself of this,

¹ See Lib. I. cap. iii. p. 17. and Lardner, l. cit. p. 170, 171.

² Lib. II. cap. xvii. p. 155.

³ Lib. IV. cap. xxxii. p. 270. From the first view it would appear to follow from this passage, that the copies of the sacred books were at that time exclusively in the hands of the teachers. In fact it asserts only thus much, that they possessed the copies *most to be depended on*; for the passage referred to in the note immediately preceding, together with many other reasons, will not permit us to doubt, that the generality of Christians also, possessed them in abundance. See Walch On the Use of the Holy Scriptures.

(viz.

(viz. that the Old and New Testaments came from one and the same God) who diligently studies the divine scriptures which are in the possession of the presbyters of the church."

Besides the evangelical and apostolical works above mentioned, Irenæus acknowledges no other to be *divine*. He appeals indeed often, and with high panegyric, to the writings of Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Papias, Hermas, and Justin Martyr, but he never betrays any such veneration for them, as he shews for the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles¹.

Here then we have an extraordinarily important evidence for the historical truth of the greatest part of the books of the New Testament:—it is the evidence of a man who lived so near the times of the Apostles, who

¹ See Lardner, *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 173—178; who has examined with much solidity the passages in which these writings are quoted.

had enjoyed an intimate intercourse with one of their immediate disciples; and was therefore as capable of investigating accurately the truth of those writings, as we are of proving the historical truth of a work attributed to Grotius or Selden:—it is the evidence of a man who was well read in all the works respecting Christianity, both of the orthodox and heretics; who *himself* doubted of the truth of some books of the New Testament, and consequently must be considered in this point as totally exempt from credulity.—This witness, thus qualified, appeals in the face of heretics to those writings, as to works *which descended incontestably from the Apostles and Evangelists*. We should, undoubtedly, without hesitation pronounce every other book, resting only on a single evidence of such weight, to be genuine. Why then should not the testimony of this witness have its full force

force on the Scriptures of the New Testament?

4. *Athenagoras.*

ATHENAGORAS, a philosopher and a native of Athens, is the most polished and elegant author of Christian antiquity; and in respect of style, excels even Origen. His two works, the *Apology* or *Petition* for the Christians, (*πρὸς τὴν βασιλῆα καὶ τοὺς Χριστιανούς*), and a *Treatise* on the Resurrection of the Dead, (*περὶ ἀναστάσεως τῶν νεκρῶν*), are written in very pure Greek, and with much wit and eloquence.—In the *Apology*, which he presented to the Emperor Marcus Antoninus*, he defended the Christians from the three crimes with which they were falsely accused, viz. atheism, incest, and an-

* This is proved, in opposition to Bayle, in the Preface to the above-mentioned (page 105. note n.) edition of the works of Justin, Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus of Antioch, p. cxlii.

thropophagy. He shews, that it is evidently absurd to accuse of atheism, those who restore to the Divinity the honours and adoration of which he had been robbed by idols; or of incest those who assert that even to look on a woman to lust after her is fornication: or of anthropophagy those who never frequent the gladiatorial shews, who declare that the use of medicines tending to procure abortion is homicide, and that the exposing of children is infanticide. The whole book cannot be read but with pleasure. Every part clearly evinces that the author had accurately studied the best works of the Grecians, and was master of the style and courtly language proper in addresses to the great.—He composed the treatise On the Resurrection of the Dead, with a view to defend the truth of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body, against the heathen philosophers.

He

He proves, that such a resurrection is by no means impossible, and so little improbable, that even the mere consideration of the nature of man, and of the justice of God,* must lead us to acknowledge it.

This view which Athenagoras had proposed to himself in his writings, did not allow him to cite passages from the sacred scriptures. On this account we discover in them (if we except a few passages, in which he expresses his propositions in the same words as we find in the books of the New Testament*), only *one* single clear testimony, and this indeed for the authenticity of the *first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*. Since the passage is too long, I will only extract the parts which my present purpose requires. In the treatise On

* They are collected by Lardner, *Credibility of the G. H.* vol. ii. p. 182—186.

the Resurrection of the Dead*, he avails himself of the proof taken from the fortunes of men in general, and particularly of the virtuous, in this life. 'The justice of God,' he infers, 'rendering it necessary to reward men as men, that is, as beings which consist not only of a soul, but also of a body, accurately according to their actions; and this reward rarely occurring in the present life; it is therefore manifest that, according to the *assertion of the Apostle*, "this corruptible and earthly must put on incorruption, — that every one may receive justly according to what he has done in the body, whether it be good or bad".'

And

* Cap. xviii—finem libri, p. 330—336.

† Ευδολοι, — — — οτι δι κατ τοι αποστολοι το φθαρτοι τουτο και αμοσμεδατοι ενδυσησθαι αφθαρσιαν, ινα — — — ικατος κομισηται δικαιω, α δια του σωματος ιπραξιν, ιτι αγαθα, ιτι κακα. Cap. xviii. p. 331.
The similitude of this passage to St. Paul's assertions, 1 Cor. xv. 53. 2 Cor. v. 10, is very remarkable:

δι,

And, in chap. xix. p. 332, he had evidently the passage of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 32, in his mind: 'If no future judgment be held on the actions of men, men are nothing better than beasts. Nay, they are more miserable than other animals who struggle with their passions, and strive after righteousness, and the fear of God, or other virtues. If there be no judgment, then the wild, bestial life is the best; then virtue is folly, and the fear of punishment ridiculous; then the enjoyment of every pleasure is the highest good, and that principle so pleasant to the votaries of luxury and lust, Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die, the first rule of life.'—Since he here appeals *expressly to an Apostle*, who had promulgated the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, yet without

δει γὰρ το φθαρτον τουτο ενδυσασθαι αφθαρσιαν,—να κομισται εναντις τα δια τον σωματος, προς α ιεραζει, ητε αγαθον, ητε κακον.

mentioning

mentioning either his name or his writings; and adopts in his proof the same sentiments which we still find in the writings of that Apostle: we shall not certainly presume too far, if we thence conclude—that at the *time of Athenagoras, the two Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians* were generally known among the Christians, and considered as the source of their faith.

5. *Theophilus of Antioch.*

THEOPHILUS, Bishop of Antioch^{*}, considering the object which he had in view, could only mention the sacred scriptures occasionally. In his 'Three Books to Autolycus,' he disputes with a heathen, whom he wished to prepare for a nearer examination of the Christian religion, by first refuting the accusations which had been

^{*} For an account of this writer, see the Preface to the above mentioned Edition, p. cxx.

thrown

thrown out, that the tenets of the Christians were absurd, and their conduct detestable for incest and anthropophagy. Notwithstanding this, we find the *Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John, the Epistle to the Romans, and the first to Timothy*, quoted under the title of *Divine Scriptures*.—In the ~~Third~~ Book, chap. xiii. p. 388, are recited various precepts of the Old Testament, which inculcate chastity and other virtues; he then adds*, ‘ But the evangelical voice teaches chastity in yet greater perfection, when it says, “ Whosoever looketh on another man’s wife to lust after her, has already committed adultery in his heart.” And it says further, “ Whosoever marries one that is divorced, committeth adultery; and whosoever putteth away his wife, except on account of in chastity,

* Ἡ δὲ εὐαγγελικὴ φωνὴ ἐπιτακτικώτερον διδάσκει περὶ ἀγνίας λεγουσα.

committeth

committeth adultery^b.”—In the same book, chap. xiv. p. 389, ‘But the Gospel says^c, “Love your enemies, and pray for them that despitefully use you. For if you only love them that love you, what merit have you? Even robbers also, and tax-gatherers do this.”—In the Second Book, chap. xxii. p. 365, he quotes the passage in 1 John i. § 3. with the following introduction: ‘This is taught us by the holy scriptures; and by all those conducted by the Spirit, among whom John says^d,’ &c.—With the title of the ‘Divine Doctrines,’ he quotes passages from Rom. xiii. 7, 8, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2^e.—And in the Third Book, chap. xii. p. 388, he says ‘the commands of the prophets and evangelical writers are throughout concor-

^b See St. Mat. v. 28. 32.

^c Το δε Ευαγγελιον λεγει.

^d Ὅθεν διδασκουσι ἡμᾶς αἱ ἁγίαὶ γράφαι καὶ πάντες πνευματικοὶ, ἐξ ὧν Ἰωάννης λεγει.

^e Lib. III. Cap. xiv. p. 389. Ἐτι — — κελευσι ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς λόγος.

dant, because they have *all* spoken as inspired by the *very same* spirit of God^f.

We may apply to this author our previous observations on Justin Martyr, Tatian, and Athenagoras. Frequent quotations from the writings of Homer, Hesiod, Plato, Euripides, Aratus, &c. discovered that Theophilus was likewise a man of learning and cultivated talents.

6. *Clement of Alexandria.*

CLEMENT, who was a teacher and presbyter at Alexandria, deserves even on this account the esteem of posterity—under his instruction was formed Origen, the most learned of all the fathers of the church. In his writings which are yet preserved^g, he quotes
all

^f Δια τοις παλαις πνευματοφθογς εν πτοματι θιου λαλονται.

^g Namely,—in the *Cohortatio ad gentes*, p. 1—93.—in the *Pedagogus*, p. 96—314.—in the eight books, named

all the books of the New Testament (except the *second Epistle of St. Peter*, the *second and third Epistles of St. John*, the *Epistle of St. James*, and the *Epistle to Philemon*), so often by name, and so amply, that were I to extract all the citations, they would fill a volume^b.—To obtain a fundamental knowledge of the Christian religion this author had travelled into Greece, Italy, Egypt, and Asia^c; he

named *Stromata*, (that is, Various Discourses), p. 934. —and in the dissertation, *Quis dives salvetur?* p. 935 —961. of the Edition of Bishop Potter, Oxford 715. fol. See Le Nourry *Adparatus ad Bibliothecam maximam patrum*, tom. i. p. 624. seq. where the reader will meet with the most ample information concerning the writings of the Alexandrian Clement. Even in these works we find very evident proofs of the great injury which Christianity has suffered from its connection with the new-platonic philosophy. See above, p. 95.

^b Lardner has collected some examples on every book; *Credibility of the G. H.* vol. ii, p. 210—330.

^c In the *Stromata*, Lib. i. p. 322. he says that his book was a short sketch of the discourses which he held with considerable persons in the above-mentioned countries.

was well acquainted with the writings of the earlier Christian teachers, Barnabas, Hermas, Clement, &c.^k; he had examined the apocryphal books which then existed among the Christians, and compared them with the genuine works of the sacred writers^l.—All these circumstances evince that he did not give his assent to the holy scriptures until he had accurately

^k He cites them often, and with great esteem; but he never pronounces them to be *divine* Scriptures, as has been shewn by Lardner, l. cit. p. 231—234.

^l He frequently quotes passages from the Gospel according to the Hebrews; the Gospel according to the Egyptians; the Preaching of Peter; the Revelation of Peter; the Traditions of Matthias. But he distinguishes them clearly enough from the *genuine* writings of the Evangelists and Apostles. See Lardner l. cit. p. 234—247.—And even if we should grant that he considered the writings of Barnabas, Hermas, and Clement of Rome, and the Sybilline verses to be *divine*, yet this would not tend to invalidate the proof for the divinity of the Scriptures of the New Testament. For we use the testimonies of the ecclesiastical Fathers not in order to prove, that these Scriptures are *of divine original*; but, that they are *genuine* writings of the *Evangelists and Apostles*.

examined

examined them; and therefore afford considerable weight to his evidence for their authenticity.

7. Tertullian.

TERTULLIAN, a presbyter at Carthage, is the most ancient of all the Latin fathers whose works are now extant. His melancholy turn of mind, and the evil customs which began to prevail among Christians, induced him to embrace the fanatical doctrines of the Montanists. But his Montanism can by no means weaken his evidence for the historical truth of the New Testament; unless we conceive that a fanatic must necessarily lose all his organs of sense. Generally speaking, his tenets have no farther influence on his writings, than to occasion his preaching a too severe system of morality; and to shew that he revered Montanus and his prophetesses Priscilla and Maximilla as inspired persons,

sons, through whom the spirit of God had spoken.---We have a great variety of his writings which display much sacred and prophane learning. But his style is extremely tedious, obscure, replete with Latin words of his own formation, entirely inharmonious, and not rarely bombastic. Cave asserts, in opposition to Lactantius^m, that "it is lofty and masculine, and carries a kind of majestic eloquence along with it, that gives a pleasant relish to the judicious and inquisitive reader." But the decisions of this author on style and eloquence are as injudicious, as his historical information is unquestionable. That Tertullian was a man of talents, and well read in the classic works of antiquity, is undoubtedⁿ. But he had read, like many grammarians and modern editors, with the aid of

^m *Histor. literar. Scriptor. ecclesiasticor.*

ⁿ I quote here the edition of his works by Nicolaus Rigaltius, Paris, 1641, fol.

the memory alone, but without taste or understanding. Lactantius is of the same opinion, "Tertullianus fuit omni genere literarum peritus, sed in eloquendo parum facilis et minus comptus, et multum obscurus fuit."

His works are filled with quotations *by name*, and long extracts from the writings of the New Testament.—In the Apology for the Christians, which he delivered to the heathen magistracy at Carthage, he appeals, among other things, to the strict obedience and reverence of the Christians towards the Roman Emperours. "How can you suppose," says he°, "that we have no regard for the welfare of the Emperours? Behold only the word of God, our Scriptures, which we by no means keep secret, but which are even in the hands of our enemies. These command us——to pray even for our enemies. —— The following precept

• Apologeticus, p. 30.

also is found there expressly, Pray for kings, princes, and powers, that all things may proceed peaceably with you."—Against Praxeas he quotes his proofs principally, as he expresses himself, from the *New Testament*, from the Gospels, and Apostles. "If I should not settle this dispute from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, I will take my proofs from the *New Testament*. For I perceive both in the *Gospels* and the *Apostles*, that God is as well visible as invisible^p."—He mentions a Latin translation of those writings, but which did not always accurately express the meaning of the original text^q.—He treats copiously of the four Gospels, of St. Matthew, of St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, in a work against Marcion^r; and proves

^p Adversus Praxeam, p. 646.—de *Novo Testamento* sumam confirmationem — In *Evangeliiis* et in *Apostolis* visibilem et invisibilem Deum deprehendo.

^q De Monogamia, p. 684.

^r Adversus Marcionem, Lib. iv. p. 502, 503.

their authenticity from numerous and credible evidences since the times of the Apostles. He quotes, *by name*, every single book (the Epistle of St. James, the second Epistle of St. Peter, and the second and third Epistles of St. John, alone excepted) with the title of *divine scriptures*, and so often, that, to prove it in this place by extracts from his works*, would be perfectly superfluous. I will mention only a single passage more, which will serve to shew how cautiously men acted at that time in examining the genuine apostolical writings. In his work *Against Heresies*, *De præscriptione hæretico-*

* The reader will find examples in Lardner's *Credibility of the G. H.* vol. ii. p. 256—277.—Or, the truth of the assertion may be seen still more clearly from the list of scriptural passages quoted by Tertullian, which is contained in the above-mentioned edition, p. 766—795.—And we cannot discover the least trace that he had received any other book as *divine*, or as a *genuine* writing of the *Evangelists and Apostles*. See Lardner, p. 284, 285.

rum,

rum[†], he speaks with great confidence of the authenticity of the apostolical writings which were adopted as such by orthodox Christians. He appeals to the evidence of communities which the Apostles had personally established, at Corinth, at Philippi, at Thessalonica, at Ephesus, and at Rome; whose members, on account of their intimate intercourse with the Apostles, could assert with the greatest degree of certainty what writings actually emanated from them. “Age jam, qui voles curiositatem melius exercere in negotio salutis tuæ, percurrere ecclesias *apostolicas*, apud quas ipsæ adhuc cathedræ apostolorum suis locis præfident; apud quas ipsæ authenticæ literæ eorum (their genuine works) recitantur. — Proxima est tibi Achaia? habes Corinthum. Si non longe es a Macedonia; habes Philippos, habes

[†] Cap. xxxvi. p. 245. Lardner has very well cleared up this obscure passage: *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 266—269.

Theſſalonicenſes. Si potes in Aſiam tendere; habes Epheſum. Si autem Italiæ adjaces; habes Romam; unde nobis quoque auctoritas præſto eſt."

SECT. III.

Evidences from Works of the Second Century, which are now loſt.

THE enemies of our religion complain often and loudly of the loſs of thoſe writings againſt Chriſtianity, which were compoſed by its ancient opponents; and ſome of them accuſe the Chriſtians, in language by no means doubtful, of having been the cauſe of the deſtruction of theſe works. But they do not take into conſideration, that of the writings alſo of the ancient friends and defenders of Chriſtianity many more have been loſt than have been preſerved. And that, together with theſe writings, many important evidences for the Authenticity of the
New

New Testament have also perished. We have already^u regretted this loss when we treated above of the history of the first century. In the second this deficiency is still greater and more to be lamented.

1. Concerning Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth, Eusebius gives us the following information^v:—He wrote seven epistles to different Christian communities, and another to a Christian matron: in the epistle to the community at Athens he exhorted men to believe and to act according to the Gospel: in the epistle to the Nicomedians he defended the true canon (or, as others translate it, the rule of truth, *τῷ τῆς ἀληθείας παριστάται κανόνι*), in opposition to the heresy of Marcion: in the epistle to the church at Amastris he had inserted expositions of the Di-

^u Book ii. chap. i.

^v Eusebii. Hist. Eccl. Lib. IV. cap. xxiii. p. 184
—187. edit. Reading.

vine Scriptures.—All these epistles are now lost; and with them much important information, and many weighty evidences for the Authenticity of the New Testament.

2. In the work of Tatian, which still remains^x, we find (on account of the particular purpose for which it was composed), few allusions to the apostolical writings.—But of these he had treated so much the more amply in his Harmony, or *Δια Τετραευαγγ.* a Gospel composed from the four Gospels taken together. This work was well known to Eusebius^y; and although the author might have inserted his heretical principles even here, yet the loss of this work is greatly to be lamented as well for many other causes as on account of its great antiquity^z.—Irenæus^a, and Clement of Alexandria^b, allude to

^x See above, p. 108.

^y Hist. Eccles. Lib. IV. cap. xxix. p. 193, 194.

^z See Valesius in Eusebium, l. cit.

^a Lib. III. cap. xxiii. §. viii. p. 222. ed. Massueti.

^b Stromat, Lib. III. p. 547. Potteri.

other

other writings of this author, in which he attempted to prove some of his heterodox tenets by quotations from the *first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*.

3. Hegesippus, a convert from Judaism, composed five books of Ecclesiastical History, in which he gave an account of the apostolical preaching*. But of this work we have nothing remaining except a few fragments preserved by Eusebius and Photius. Although the historian might not have entirely laid aside that credulity and inclination for the fabulous, which was peculiar to the Jews of his time (and that this was the case is plain from the extracts in the above-mentioned authors), nevertheless, the loss of his work is much to be lamented; because there undoubtedly existed in it much material information for a history of the scriptural writings, which he must

* Eusebius Hist. Eccles. Lib. IV. cap. viii. p. 150.
have

have collected in his intercourse with many considerable teachers of Christianity. However, we discover from the fragments, that he was very well acquainted with the Scriptures of the New Testament. For he quotes them often, although not by name; and his manner of writing is invariably in that peculiarity of style belonging to these books.^d

4. Melito, Bishop of Sardis, has rendered himself remarkable in ecclesiastical history, particularly by his examination of the Sacred Books of the Old Testament^e. He composed various writings, of which we scarcely know more than the titles, as they are given to us in Eusebius^f. His books,

^d See Lardner's Credibility.

^e He travelled into Palestine, on purpose to obtain information on the true Canon of the Old Testament. Eusebius has preserved his catalogue, H. E. Lib. IV. cap. xxvi. p. 190, 191.

^f Hist. Eccles. Lib. IV. cap. xxvi. p. 188, 189.

On the Conduct of Christians; Of the Prophets; Of the Church; On the Lord's Day; Of Obedience to the Gospel (περι ὑπακοῆς πειρασ); On the Conception and Birth of Christ (περι κτίσεως καὶ γενέσεως Χριστοῦ); On the Revelation of St. John; and On the Incarnation of God (περι ἐνσωματοῦ Θεοῦ); contained probably more particular information concerning the apostolical writings.—From the few fragments of his works we can produce him only as an evidence for the *high antiquity of the Revelation of St. John*; yet even this is of dubious import, as we have no information concerning the contents of his treatise on this subject².

5. Of

² The epistle of Melito to a person of the name of Onesimus, who was the cause of his journey into Palestine, begins thus, (Eusebius 1: cit. p. 191). 'As you have often, from your love towards the divine doctrine, required of me that I should collect from the Law and the Prophets those passages which concern the Redeemer and our common faith; and as you were desirous

5. Of the terrible persecutions which the Christians in Gaul suffered in the time of the Emperour Marcus Antoninus, we find a very affecting relation in the epistle which the communities at Vienne and Lyons, in France, sent on this account to the Christians in Asia. Eusebius has preserved a great part of it in his Ecclesiastical History^a. The sufferings of the Christians, the patience, cheerfulness, and steadfast behaviour of the martyrs, are described by sentiments and expressions which are taken from the Scriptures of the New Testament.—“Then was the saying of the Lord fulfilled, *The time will come when whosoever killeth you*

desirous of knowing accurately the *old scriptures*, their number, and the order in which they were composed, — I have therefore inquired after the *books of the Old Testament*,” &c.—This passage appears to prove, that at that time existed also a *second collection of sacred books*, under the name of the *New Testament*.—See Lardner, l. cit. p. 148.

^a Lib. V. cap. i—iv. p. 198. sq.

will

will think that he doth God service."

John xvi. 2.—"They (viz. the martyrs) prayed for their executioners, as did the holy Stephen, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.*" Acts vii. 50.

—"They endeavoured to follow the example of Christ, *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God.*" Phil. ii. 6.—"He (a martyr of the name of Vettius Epagathus) was a true disciple of Christ, *following the Lamb whithersoever it goes.*" Rev. xiv. 4.—When we reflect

that this epistle was written by a community in which Irenæus (who has deposited such ample evidence for the Scriptures of the New Testament, p. 109.) was at that time a Presbyter, we may without hesitation use these passages as proofs of the *antiquity of the Gospel of St. John, of the Acts of the Apostles by St. Luke, of the Epistles to the Romans and Philippians, and of the Revelation of St. John;*

although these books are not quoted by name.

6. Miltiades, one of the Apologists for Christianity, was, according to the information of Eusebius¹, well skilled in the Divine Scriptures and Christian theology. He had given convincing proofs of his erudition in a book which he wrote against the Montanists with this title, *περι του μη δειν προφητην εν εκστασει λαλειν*, 'That it does not become prophets to speak in ecstacy;' and in his works against the Jews and Gentiles².—"He has also left us," says Eusebius, "as well in his writings against the Gentiles, as in those against the Jews, monuments of his zeal for the divine books."—Without doubt, therefore, he had copiously used the

¹ Hist. Eccles. Lib. V. cap. xvii. p. 232, 233.

² See Eusebius, l. cit.—In the first work he had undoubtedly made mention of the *first Epistle to the Corinthians*. Compare the remark of Valefius in loc. cit.

authorities

authorities of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

7. I have produced Theophilus of Antioch above (p. 122.) as an evidence for the authenticity of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John, of the Epistle to the Romans, and also of the first Epistle to Timothy.—Did the work which he wrote against Hermogenes, *προς την αἵρεσιν Ερμogeneους*, still exist, we might likewise prove from him the *antiquity of the Revelation of St. John*¹.

8. Pantænus, whom Eusebius^m, apparently by mistake, mentions as president of the catechetical school at Alexandria, was, as this author informs us, such a faithful and learned

¹ See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles. Lib. IV. cap. xxiv.* p. 287,—who says, that Theophilus in the above-mentioned book had taken some of his proofs from the Revelation of St. John, *ὅ ἐκ τῆς ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰωάννου κέχρηται μαρτυρίας.*

^m *Hist. Eccles. Lib. V. cap. x.* p. 222, 223.—See Lardner's *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 203.

supporter

supporter of Christianity, that he would have instructed posterity as usefully by his writings, as he did his contemporaries by his sermons.—He preached the Gospel in India^a, and is said to have found there the Gospel of St. Matthew in the Hebrew language*. Whether this information, which Eusebius gives in a doubtful manner, be true or not, nevertheless it proves thus

^a The old ecclesiastical historians mean frequently by this name Arabia Felix; see Michaelis Intr. to the N. T. vol. iii. p. 124. of the learned Mr. Marsh's Transl.; but here it is India properly so called, India on the Ganges. Christianity was preached there in the first century by the Apostle St. Thomas. This is asserted—1. By the ancient writers consulted by Eusebius, Hist. eccles. iii. 1. v. 10.—2. By the most learned historians of the East, Asseman bibl. orient. tom. III. par. i. p. 611, and par. ii. p. 25.—And 3. By those Christian sects, which have existed from the most early antiquity in India, particularly on the coasts of Malabar, who have an ancient tradition to the same purpose, and therefore call themselves St. Thomas's Christians.—La Croze, 38.

* Eusebius l. cit. *ἡδὲ λόγος ἵπεν αὐτοῦ* — *κατὰ Μάρθαν μαθητὴν, κ. τ. λ.*

much,

much, that the *Gospel of St. Matthew* was already known in the *earliest ages*. —According to Jerom's relation², he composed also certain commentaries on the Bible.

9. The work of Clement of Alexandria, in which he principally considered the Holy Scriptures of the Christians, his *Hypotuposes*, is also lost, except a few fragments. It contained explications of many books both of the Old and New Testament, especially of the Epistles of St. Paul, and of the Catholic Epistles³. —Eusebius has preserved the following information from it⁴—That the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by St. Paul in the Hebrew language, and translated into Greek by St. Luke his companion; that the Gos-

² Hujus multi — in sanctam scripturam extant Commentarii. De vir. illustr. cap. xxxvi.

³ Eusebius. Hist. Eccles. Lib. VI. cap. xiv. p. 273. et Photius, Biblioth. Codice cix. p. 287. edit. Andr. Schotti. Rothomagi, 1653. folio.

⁴ Loc. cit.

pels which contain the Genealogies (viz. of St. Matthew and St. Luke) were composed before the others; that St. Mark wrote his Gospel at the request of St. Peter's disciples at Rome, and that St. Peter was so far from rejecting it, that, at the instigation of the Holy Ghost, he imparted a divine consequence to it*; and that St. John had

^b Loc. cit. Comp. Lib. II. cap. xv. pag. 64. Γνωστα δὲ το πραχθειν (viz. that St. Mark had composed in writing the speeches of St. Peter, at the request of the Romans) φασι τον Αποστολον (St. Peter) αποκαλυψαντος αυτην του Πνευματος ησθηναι τη των αιδων προθυμια, κυρωσαι τε την γραφην (the Gospel of St. Mark) εις εντιυξιν ταις εκκλησιαις.—The sentence αποκαλυψαντος αυτην του Πνευματος has been always referred by translators to the preceding words; but if it be construed with those which follow, every difficulty will vanish.—“Peter, having discovered what had been done, and being instigated by the Holy Ghost, granted the desire of those men, (the Romans) and gave his sanction to the Gospel of St. Mark, that it should be read in the Christian communities.” Lardner torments himself with the difficulty of this passage; Credibility, vol. ii. p. 215. But amidst all his observations he has not reflected that the structure of the words

had written πνευματικὸν εὐαγγέλιον, a Gospel which treated especially of the divine nature of Christ, the others being principally employed on his human. Τὸν . . . Ἰωάννην ἐσκαῖον συνιδόντα, ὅτι τὰ σωματικά ἐν τοῖς εὐαγγελίοις δεδηλωται, προβραπεντα ὑπο τῶν γνωρίμων πνευματικῶν θεοφορηθέντα πνευματικῶν ποιησαι εὐαγγέλιον.

Eusebius and Jerom would have performed still greater service to posterity, had they made longer and more complete extracts from those writings of considerable teachers which existed in their times. Both of them notice various teachers of the second century who had written commentaries on the scriptural books. But as they are silent on their contents, we can neither determine what information these

words in Eusebius does not by any means necessitate the connection of ἀποκαλυφ. κ. τ. λ. with γροττα—Ἀποστολῶν: as if the Holy Ghost had revealed to St. Peter, that the Romans had petitioned St. Mark to compose his Gospel, and that he had granted their request.

writers gave, nor on what books of the Bible they had employed their labours'.

CHAP.

† We can make no use of the spurious writings of this century for our present purpose.—1. The *Acts* of Paul and of Thecla attribute indeed many of the same sentiments to the Apostle St. Paul, as exist in the books of our New Testament. But it is uncertain whether this be the same work which is mentioned by the Ecclesiastical Fathers. (Lardner's *Credibility*, vol. ii. p. 310).—2. The Sibylline Oracles were forged in all probability about the second century. They also relate (in prophecy, as they pretend) almost every single event of the evangelical history. But they do not mention either expressly, or by name, any of the writings of the New Testament. Lardner, l. cit. p. 313. seq.—3. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs speak often in the language of the New Testament. But it is most uncertain, whether this writing be of that early antiquity which many scholars imagine. Origen quotes a work under this title. But how can it be proved that the work, which we still possess, is the very same? Lardner, l. cit. p. 324. seq.—4. The *Recognitions of Clement*, (see *Cotelerii Patres Apostol.* vol. i. p. 483. seq.) which contain Disputations of the Apostle St. Peter with Simon Magus, and mention other discourses, and a variety of miracles by the same Apostle;—5. The *Clementine Homilies*, which are almost of the very same
tenour,

CHAP. III.

Witnesses in the Third Century.

SECT. I.

Evidences of Witnesses in the Third Century.

BEFORE I introduce the complete catalogues, which Origen and Eusebius have left us, of those writings which the Christians of the first century held as genuine works of the Evangelists and Apostles, and venerated as divine

tenour, and in all probability are the ground-work from which, after many additions and improvements, arose the work mentioned above, in No. 4. (Cotelerius, l. cit. p. 603. seq.) ;—And, 6. The Clementine Epitome, a compilation out of the Recognitions and Homilies; (Cotelerius, l. cit. p. 755. seq.)—: these three works, to which the venerable name of Clement has been forged, contain merely similar expressions and sentiments, but not a single quotation, either expressly, or by name, from the books of our New Testament. Extracts from the above-mentioned writings may be seen in Lardner, l. cit. p. 342. seq.

books, I will cursorily mention some other witnesses who lived in the beginning of the third century, but whose writings have not descended to us.

1. *Caius Romanus.*

CAIUS, who was a Presbyter of the church of Rome, and a most learned man, quotes in his Dialogue with Proculus, a follower of Montanus, *all the Epistles* which we have at present under the name of *St. Paul*, as *genuine works* of this Apostle, *except the Epistle to the Hebrews*, which he has omitted to enumerate among the rest. — We find this information in an extract which Eusebius has preserved from this work which no longer exists*.

2. *Hippolytus Portuenfis.*

From the fragments which we still possess of the works* of Hippolytus Portuenfis,

* Hist. Eccles. Lib. VI. ch. xx. p. 285.

* Joh. Albert Fabricius has collected these fragments,

Portuensis, we are led to believe that he was a learned man; and the conciseness, solidity, and force with which he wrote, clearly prove that he far excelled all the writers of his time. In support of this I shall quote a single passage*, which, if not an adequate testimony for the authenticity of our four Gospels, will at least demonstrate the truth of the history related in them. Hippolytus is proving that Jesus was both perfect man, and perfect God. "His humanity," says he, "may be easily perceived, by the circumstances of his feeling hunger and fatigue and thirst; by his fearfully fleeing, and anxiously praying; by his sleeping on a pillow; his imploring for the removal of the cup of sorrow; his

ments, and published them together with the other works attributed to him, at Hamburg, 1716, 2 vol. folio.

* It has been preserved by Theodoret. See Fabricii Hippolyt. vol. i. p. 168.

sweating from fear of death, and his being strengthened by an angel; by his being betrayed by Judas, mocked by Caiaphas and Herod, scourged by Pilate, insulted by the soldiers, and crucified by the Jews; his commending with a loud voice his spirit to the Father; his bending his head and giving up the ghost; having his side pierced by a spear, being laid, wrapped up in fine linen, in the grave, and raised up on the third day by the Father. His divinity may be easily discovered, since he was worshipped by angels, visited by shepherds, expected by Simeon; he received the testimony of Anna, was visited by the Magi, and announced by a star; he changed water into wine at the marriage feast, calmed the stormy sea, walked upon the water, gave sight to one born blind, raised Lazarus to life, who had been dead four days, and performed many other miracles, forgiving sins, and imparting
miraculous

miraculous powers to his Apostles."—As early as the time of Eusebius this writer was so little known, that men were even ignorant of what place he was Bishop¹. And scholars of the present day, after having examined all the documents of antiquity, remain still uncertain whether we possess any writings which can be safely attributed to him². We do not even know whether he lived in Italy or in Arabia; whether he was a divine or a statesman³.

3. *Ammonius.*

Ammonius (whom Eusebius and Jerom suppose to have been the cele-

¹ Ἰππολύτος, ἱερέας—πρεσβυς ἐκκλησίας. Hist. Eccl. Lib. VI. cap. xx. p. 284.

² See Mill's Prolegomena in N. T. Num. 655. et Fabricius Præfat. in Hippol.

³ Some believe that he was Bishop of Porto, in Italy; others, of Portus Romanus, in Arabia Felix. See Fabricius l. cit.—Heumann asserts, that he was not a spiritual, but a temporal ἐπισκοπος.

brated

brated Alexandrian philosopher Ammonius Saccas), composed a Harmony of the Four Gospels, in which he had used the Gospel of St. Matthew as a foundation^b. That which we possess at present under his name is, if not entirely forged, at least very much mutilated^c. I therefore reckon this work among the lost writings of antiquity; and would proceed directly to the catalogues of Origen, but have yet to remark that

4. *Julius Africanus,*

WHO flourished in the beginning of this century, has afforded an evidence for the authenticity of the *Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke*, in the epistle to Aristides, in which he endea-

^b Eusebius Hist. Eccl. Lib. VI. c. 19: p. 282. Euseb. epistola ad Carpianum, which is prefixed to his Harmony. Hieronymus, De Vir. Illust. cap. lv.

^c See Wetstein Prolegom. ad N. T. Tom. I. p. 65. sequ. Comp. Lardner's Credibility, Vol. II. p. 413. and the following pages.

vours

ours to remove the apparent contradiction in the genealogy of Christ as delivered by these Evangelists^d.

5. Origen.

ORIGEN, the most learned and laborious of all the fathers, who was in such high estimation even among the heathen philosophers, that they dedicated their writings to him, and transmitted them to him for his revival^e, has particularly distinguished himself by his labours on the biblical writings. He not only composed a celebrated critical work on the Old Testament, but wrote also a threefold exposition of the books of the whole Bible; Scholia, or short notes;—Tomes, or extensive commentaries, in which he employed all his learning, critical, sacred, and prophane;—and

^d See the extract from the above mentioned epistle in Eusebius Hist. Eccl. Lib. I. cap. vii. p. 21—25.

^e Eusebius Hist. Eccl. Lib. VI. cap. xix. p. 479.

Tracts, or homilies to the people^f. Of these only a small portion is come down to us, and that for the most part in Latin translations made by Jerom or Rufinus; the rest have been destroyed by the ravages of time.

He is the first who has given us a *perfect catalogue* of those books, which Christians unanimously, or at least the major part of them have considered as genuine writings of the Apostles, and as works of divine inspiration.—In his thirteenth Homily, upon Genesis^g, he discovers in the servants of Isaac, who dug cisterns, a type of the scriptural writers. “His servants,” says he, “are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John: His servants also are Peter, James, Jude, and the Apostle Paul: who all

^f Hieronymus, Prolegom. in Ezechiel.—He superintended also a very accurate edition of the whole New Testament, Hieronymus in Matth. xxiv. 36. Origenes in Joan. 1. Comp. Ernesti De Origene Interpr. gr. auct.—in the Opusc. Théol. p. 306, seq.

^g Operum Tom. II. p. 95. edit. De la Rue.

dig the wells of the New Testament.”

—In the same manner he allegorises^b the history of Joshua, in his seventh Homily on this bookⁱ. “When our Lord Jesus Christ came, of whom that son of Nave was a type, he sent forth the priests, his Apostles, with trumpets, from which they sounded the heavenly doctrine. Matthew sounds first with his priestly trumpet in his Gospel. Mark also, and Luke and John sounded each his own trumpet. In like manner Peter sounds aloud with the two trumpets of his Epistles; as does James also and Jude. John sounds again with his trumpet, in his Epistles and in the Revelation; and Luke in his Acts of the Apostles. Last of all appeared he who said of himself, ‘and last of all God appointed me an Apostle,’ and thundered with the trumpets

^b Concerning this pernicious and absurd mode of interpretation, see above, p. 97.

ⁱ Oper. Tom. II. p. 412.

of his fourteen Epistles so powerfully that the walls of Jericho, and all the machines of superstition, and the doctrines of the philosophers fell to the ground."

The passages here quoted are extant at present only in the Latin version. Eusebius has been at the pains to collect in a particular chapter^k, the catalogue of the books of the New Testament from the works of Origen. From his Commentary upon the Gospel of St. Matthew he copies the following passage, which determines what histories of the life of Jesus were universally received among the Christians. "I have learned by tradition (the evidences of antiquity) concerning the four Gospels, which are exclusively received without dispute by the whole church of God under heaven, That

^k Cap. xxv. Lib. VI. p. 289—292. The title of this Chapter is, *ὅπως τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν γράφων ἐκτελεσθῶσι*, namely, Origen.

the

the first was written by St. Matthew—who composed it in the Hebrew language for the use of the profelytes from Judaism;—the second by St. Mark,—the third by St. Luke,—and the last by St. John.”—Concerning the Epistles of the Apostles, the historian gives us from the ‘Commentaries upon St. John’s Gospel,’ and the ‘Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews,’ the following information: “St. Paul did not write to all the communities which he himself had established, and the Epistles which he did write are not long. St. Peter has left one Epistle, universally acknowledged; the second also ought not to be entirely excluded from the number of his works, because the matter is still doubtful. St. John has written a Gospel, the Revelation, and a short Epistle. The second and third Epistles ought not to be entirely rejected, since they were considered by various people as genuine works of
St.

St. John. The Epistle to the Hebrews could not well come from St. Paul, because the Greek in which it is written is more elegant than that of the other Epistles of this Apostle. In all probability the subject matter was furnished by St. Paul, but the construction of the words is the work of some other person who recorded the thoughts of the Apostle, and illustrated them with various remarks."—This is Origen's review of the writings of the New Testament; I will insert below the whole passage of Eusebius, from which I have here only extracted certain parts¹. Whoever desires to receive

¹ Loc. cit. p. 290, 291. *ἢ δὲ τῇ πρώτῃ τῶν εἰς τὸ κατὰ Ματθαίον εὐαγγέλιον, τοῖς ἐκκλησιαστικοῖς φυλαττῶν παύσις, μὴ τίσσας εἶδαι εὐαγγέλια μαρτυρεῖται, ὡς πῶς γραφὴν ὡς ἐν παραδόσει μάθω περὶ τῶν τίσσας εὐαγγελίων, ἅ καὶ μὴ ἀντιζήτηται ἐν τῇ ὑπο τῷ ἡμῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ τῷ Θεῷ· ὅτι πρῶτοι μὲν γεγραπταὶ τὸ κατὰ τοῦ ποταμιῶν, ὕστερον δὲ ἀποστολῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ Ματθαίου, ἐκδιδόκεται αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων πισύσας, γραμμασὶν ἰβραϊκοῖς συντεταγμένοι· δι-
τίτοι*

ceive further information of this teacher's evidences for the New Testament,

τερον δι το κατα Μαρκον, ὡς Πιτρος ἰφηγησατο αὐτῇ ποιησαντα, ὃν και ὕιον εν τη καθολικῃ ἐπιστολῇ δια τούτων ὠμολογησε φασκων, ασπαζεται ὑμας ἡ εν Βαβυλωνι συνεκληκτη, και Μαρκος, ὁ ὕιος μῦ· και τριτὸν το κατα Λευκαι, το ὑπο Παυλου ἐπαινουμενον ευαγγελιον, τοις ἀπο τῶν ἐθνῶν πιστοποιηκοτα· ἐπὶ πασι το κατα Ιωαννην· και εν τῷ πεμπτῷ δι τῶν εἰς το κατα Ιωαννην ἐξηγητικῶν, ὃ αὐτος ταυτα περὶ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν τῶν Αποστολῶν φησιν· ὃ δι ἰκανῶς διακονος γινεσθαι τῆς καινῆς διαθήκῆς ἡ γραμματος ἀλλὰ πνευματος Παυλος· ὃ πεπληρωκὸς το ευαγγελιον ἀπο Ἱερουσαλημ και κυκλῶ μεχρὶ τῆ Ἰλνυρικῆς, οὐδὲ πασαις ἐγγραφει, αἷς ἐδιδάξει ἐκκλησιαῖς· ἀλλὰ και αἷς ἐγγραφει, ολιγους σιχους ἐπιστελλει· Πιτρος δι ἐφ' ᾧ οἰκοδομεῖται ἡ Χριστῷ ἐκκλησια, ἥς πυλαι ἀδὲ ἡ κατισχυσοῦσι, μιαν ἐπιστολὴν ὁμολογουμένην καταλειποι· ἐγὼ δι και δευτεραν, ἀμφιβαλλεται γαρ. τι δει περὶ το ἀναπίστοτος λεγειν ἐπὶ το σῆθος του Ἰησοῦ, Ιωαννη; ὡς ευαγγελιον ἐν καταλειποι, ὁμολογῶν δυνασθαι τοςαυτα ποιησειν, ἃ οὐδὲ ὁ κοσμος χωρησαι ἰδυατο· ἐγρᾶψε δι και τῇ ἀποκαλυψιν, κειλευθεις σιωπησαι και μὴ γραφαι τας τῶν ἑπτα βροτῶν φωνας· καταλειποι δι και ἐπιστολὴν πανυ ολιγῶν σιχῶν· ἐγὼ δι και δευτεραν και τριτην· ἐπεὶ ἡ παντις φασι γησιους εἶναι ταυτας· πλην ἡκ εἰσι σιχῶν ἀμφοτεραι ἑκατον· ἐτι πρὸς τουτοις περὶ τῆς πρὸς Ἑβραίους ἐπιστολῆς εν ταις εἰς αὐτὴν ὁμιλιαῖς ταυτα διαλαμβάναι· ὅτι ὁ χαρακτηρ τῆς

ment, may consult Lardner's *Credibility*, in which this article is treated with most particular attention.

SECT. II.

Information collected by Eusebius from the Works of the Three First Centuries.

HAD the writers of the two first centuries possessed the same anxious care

λεξείως της προς Εβραίους επιγεγραμμένης επιστολής, ουκ έχει το εν λόγω ιδιωτικόν τε Αποστολήν, ὁμολογησάντος ἑαυτὸν ιδιωτὴν εἶναι τῷ λόγῳ, τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τῇ φράσει· ἀλλὰ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπιστολὴ συνθεσὶς τῆς λεξείως Ἑλληνικωτέρα, πᾶς ὁ ἐπισταμένος κρίνειν φράσεων διαφορὰς, ὁμολογήσαι αὐτὸν· πάλιν τε αὖ ὅτι τὰ νοήματα τῆς ἐπιστολῆς θαυμασία ἐστὶ, καὶ οὐ δευτέρα τῶν Αποστολικῶν ὁμολογούμενων γραμμάτων, καὶ τούτο αὖ συμφέσαι εἰκαὶ ἀληθεῖς, πᾶς ὁ προσέχων τὴν ἀναγνώσει τὴν Αποστολικήν· τοῖς μετ' ἑτέρᾳ ἐπιφέρει λεγόν· ἐγὼ δὲ ἀποφαινομένος εἰκοίμ' αὐτὸ, ὅτι τὰ μὲν νοήματα τῆς Αποστολῆς ἐστὶν ἡ δὲ φράσις καὶ ἡ συνθεσίς, ἀπομνημονεύσαντος τισὶς τὰ ἀποστολικά, καὶ ὥσπερ σχολιογραφήσαντος τὰ εἰρημένα ὑπὸ τοῦ διδασκαλοῦ· εἰ τις γὰρ ἐκκλησία ἔχει ταύτην

care for posterity which Origen evinced, we should have been able to prove the authenticity of the books of the New Testament with greater ease and more satisfaction. Yet Eusebius has, in a certain degree, supplied the loss. This father of ecclesiastical-history assures us that he had read the works of Christian antiquity with great diligence, and especially with the view of ascertaining what writings had been received since the origin of Christianity as genuine works of the Evangelists and Apostles. He imparts the result of this inquiry in several particular chapters of his Ecclesiastical History. —In the Third book^m he treats of the Epistles of the Apostles; respecting which, he had found in the works of

ταύτην ἐπιστολὴν ὡς Παυλῆ, αὐτὴ εὐδοκίμειτο καὶ ἐπὶ τετῶ· ἔ γὰρ εἰκὴ οἱ ἀρχαῖοι ἀνδρες ὡς Παυλῆ παρὰ διδάκασιν· τίς δὲ ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν, τὸ μὲν ἀληθὲς Θεὸς εἶδει.

^m Cap. iii. iv. and xxiv. p. 89—92, and 115—118.

the *first* and *second* centuries the following information: 'That the first Epistle of St. Peter has always been universally received as divine: but that called his second Epistle, although not received as divine, *ευδιαθηκος*; has nevertheless been carefully studied as an useful work; that the fourteen Epistles, which go under the name of St. Paul, have been universally revered as divine scriptures, except that some have doubted concerning the Epistle to the Hebrews, because the Romish church did not consider it to be the work of St. Paul^a. That St. Luke, a physician, has left us two books, divinely inspired, namely, a Gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles; and that many of the ancients were of opinion that St. Paul means this Gospel whenever he speaks of some Gospel

^a Τινες ηβειτηκασι την προς Εβραιους, προς της Ρωμαιων εκκλησιας ως μη Παυλος εστιν αυτην αυτιλαγισθαι φησαντες.

of his (St. Paul's) own. That the Gospels were written in the following order of time; St. Matthew's first of all, for the Hebrews, and in the Hebrew language; then St. Mark's, which was composed at the request of the Christians at Rome; afterwards that of St. Luke, who was induced to undertake it from the spurious gospels which were at that time in circulation; and that last of all St. John had perused the three preceding and confirmed them; yet, as they related only the actions of Christ which took place after the imprisonment of John the Baptist, he therefore had thought it necessary to write his Gospel, and supply in it what was wanting in the others: and that he in particular had received the matter concerning the Divinity of Christ from the Holy Ghost. That besides this Gospel, the first Epistle, which bears the name of St. John, has been universally ascribed

to him both by ancients and moderns; that the second and third Epistles were rejected by some; and that the majority were perfectly in doubt concerning The Revelation *.

Eusebius has given the most perfect account of this subject in the twenty-fifth chapter of the third book^p; in which he collects and lays before the reader the result of the information contained in detached parts of the preceding books.

In this he delivers not his own private opinion, but the opinion of the church, *εκκλησιαστικη παραδωσις*, the sum

* *Ἡ προτέρα τῶν ἐπιστολῶν παρατετοῖς γυν καὶ τοῖς ἐν ἀρχαίοις ἀναμφίλεκτος ὁμολογῆται· ἀντιλεγόμεναι δὲ αἱ λοιπαὶ δύο τῆς δ' ἀποκαλύψεως ἐφ' ἑκάτερον ἐν τῇν παρα τοῖς πολλοῖς περιλαμβάνεται ἡ δόξα.* Loc. cit. p. 118. But concerning the Revelation, *Even yet* (that is, notwithstanding all preceding inquiries) *the majority are in doubt*, (know not, whether to hold it genuine or spurious.)

^p The commencement of the chapter is as follows: *Ἐυλόγον δ' ἐνταυθα γινόμενης ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰς δηλωθείσας τῆς κατὰς διαθήκης γραφάς.*

of what he had found in the writings of the primitive Christians. The cited passage contains consequently the opinion of the whole Christian church during the three first centuries; and a proper insight into its meaning is of great importance to us. — Eusebius unites the *νοθαι γραφαι* (those writings which were actually spurious, or thought such) with the *αντιλεγόμεναι* (the doubtful). After having spoken of the *αντιλεγόμεναι*, he immediately adds, *εν τοις νοθοις και κατατεταχθω των Παυλε πραξεων η γραφη, ο, τε λεγομενος Ποιμην* “among the spurious are to be reckoned the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd,” &c. Whence it appears to me clear, that he speaks in this passage of the authenticity of the books, whether they are genuine or spurious, and not of their divine inspiration. — Again, he calls the *ομολογουμεναι γραφαι* (universally received books) also, *αληθεις και απλαστοι*, genuine and not forged; and

opposes them to those which were falsely attributed to the Apostles, *ταῖς ὀνομασί τῶν Ἀποστόλων προφερομέναις*.—He places the Revelation of St. John also under the *νόθα* or *αντιλεγόμενα*, for this reason, because the majority of the ancients doubted whether they should consider it as the writing of St. John the Apostle, or of some other person, consequently as genuine or spurious.—Lastly, he also classes the Shepherd of Hermas, the Revelation of Peter, the Acts of Paul, and the Epistle of Barnabas, under the *νόθα* (or, *αντιλεγόμενα*). Now among the ancients none ever thought these books divine¹, but their authenticity indeed has been called in question.

These arguments evince, if I mistake not, that Eusebius speaks here of the authenticity, not of the divine inspiration of those writings which existed in his time under the names of

¹ See above, p. 48, note 1.

the Apostles, Evangelists, and apostolical men. His intention in this place is not to mention what writings were considered as divine; but to ascertain the three following points:—

1. What writings were received by the ancients as genuine works of the Apostles, Evangelists, and apostolical men:—2. Of what writings the authenticity had been called in question:—And 3. Those which were entirely rejected, as spurious.

On these points the opinion of the three first centuries was as follows:

I. Ὁμολογῆναι γραφαί (ἀνωμολογῆναι; or, ἀληθεῖς καὶ ἀπλάστοι) writings which were *universally* received as the genuine works of the persons whose names they bear.

In this class Eusebius reckons, 1. The four Gospels; 2. The Acts of the Apostles; 3. The Epistles of St. Paul; 4. The first Epistle of St. John; 5. The first Epistle of St. Peter. The Revelation

Revelation of St. John might also *perhaps* be placed in this class, because *some* think its authenticity incontrovertible, yet the *majority* leave the matter undetermined¹.

II. *Αντιλεγόμεναι*, writings on whose authenticity the ancients were *not unanimous*; which some held to be supposititious².

According to Eusebius, even these have the *majority of voices* among the ancients in their favour. He expressly calls them, *γνωριμα ὅμως τοῖς πολλοῖς* (writings acknowledged *by most* to be genuine), and *παρα πλείοις τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν γιγνώσκόμενα* (received by the majority). A few doubted of their authenticity; and therefore Eusebius ranks them under the contested, *ἀντιλεγόμενα, ὃν νοθα*.

¹ See above, p. 166.

² He names these writings also *νοθαὶ γραφαί*, spurious writings; that is, according to the opinion of some. These *νοθαί* do not, therefore, compose a distinct class, as is the general supposition.



In this class he enumerates, of the writings of the New Testament, 1. The Epistle of St. James; 2. The Epistle of St. Jude; 3. The second Epistle of St. Peter; 4. The second and third Epistles of St. John. The Revelation of St. John, he adds, is also by some placed in this class[†].

And, of other writings, the Acts of St. Paul; The Shepherd of Hermas; The Revelation of St. Peter; the Epistle of Barnabas; The Doctrines of the Apostles; and the Gospel according to the Hebrews.

III. *Αποφα και δυσσεβη*, (absurd and impious); Writings which had been *universally rejected as evidently spurious.*

In this class he includes the Gospels of Peter, of Thomas, and of Matthias;

[†] For in early times some believed that this work was not composed by John the apostle, but by a prefbyter of the same name, or by some other person. See the following 5th chapter of this book.

the

the Acts of Andrew, of John, and of other Apostles. These writings, says he, contain evident errors, are written in a style entirely different from that of the Apostles, and have not been thought worthy of being mentioned by any one of the ancients.

CHAP. IV.

*A summary Recapitulation of the
Evidences mentioned above.*

I WILL now reduce into order the depositions of the witnesses, who have been already separately examined, and enable the reader to perceive at one view what has been the opinion of men during the *two first centuries and half* on each individual book of the New Testament.

I. The Gospel by St. Matthew

IS pronounced to be a genuine work of the Evangelist whose name it bears, 1. by Papias, 87*; 2. by many ancient writers of the first century, consulted

* The figures after the names of the different witnesses enumerated in this chapter, refer to the pages of this work, where their evidences may be found.

by

by Eusebius, 89; 3. by Justin Martyr, 105; 4. Tatian, 136; 5. Irenæus, 110; 6. Athenagoras, 117; 7. Theophilus of Antioch, 123; 8. Clement of Alexandria, 125; 9. Tertullian, 132; 10. Ammonius 153; 11. Julius Africanus, 154; 11. Origen, 155; and by all the primitive writers, without exception, whom Eusebius had read, 169.

And this may be inferred also, yet only with a degree of *probability*, from the writings of Barnabas, 37; Clement of Rome, 53; Ignatius, 78; and Polycarp, 81".

" Lardner has collected together the evidences of the later witnesses in his Supplement to the first book of the second part of the Gospel History, vol. i. p. 95 —102. of the first edition.—He has treated of them more copiously in the work which has been so often mentioned, his *Credibility of the Gospel History*.—In the Supplement he has generally confined himself to those witnesses who determine also the time when the different books of Holy Writ were composed. The reader will therefore find more witnesses enumerated in my Catalogue than in his.

II. *The*

II. *The Gospel by St. Mark*

IS declared to be a genuine writing of the Evangelist, to whom it is ascribed, by 1. Papias, 87; 2. many ancient writers of the first century, consulted by Eusebius, 89; 3. Justin Martyr, 105; 4. Tatian, 136; 5. Irenæus, 110; 6. Clement of Alexandria, 125; 7. Tertullian, 132; 8. Ammonius, 153; 9. Origen, 155; and by all the ancients whom Eusebius had read, 169.

Clement of Rome, 53; and Ignatius, 78, were, probably, of the same opinion.*

III. *The Gospel and Acts of the Apostles by St. Luke,*

ARE adopted as the undeniable works of St. Luke, the companion and disciple of St. Paul, by, 1. the ancient writers of the first century, consulted

* For the later witnesses, see Lardner's Supplement, vol. i. p. 173—180. of the first edition.

by Eusebius, 89; 2. Justin Martyr, 105; 3. Tatian, 136; 4. Irenæus, 110; 5. Clement of Alexandria, 125; 6. Tertullian, 132; 7. Ammonius, 153; 8. Julius Africanus, 154; 9. Origen, 155; and by all the ancient writers quoted by Eusebius, 169.

Clement of Rome, 53; Ignatius, 78; Polycarp, 81; and the Communities at Lyons and Vienne, 141, may also, perhaps, be reckoned among the number of witnesses *.

IV. *The Gospel by St. John*

IS, with great unanimity and particular respect, considered as the genuine writing of this Apostle by, 1. the ancient writers of the first century, consulted by Eusebius, 89; 2. by Justin Martyr, 105; 3. Tatian, 109. 136; 4. Irenæus, 110; 5. Theophilus of An-

* For the later witnesses, see Lardner's Supplement, vol. i. p. 218—227. first edition.

tioch,

hoch, 123; 6. Clement of Alexandria, 125; 7. Tertullian, 132; 8. Ammonius, 153; 9. Origen, 155; and by all the Fathers cited by Eusebius, 169.

To these might be added the Communities at Lyons and Vienne, 141'.

V. The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans

IS declared to be authentic by, 1. Irenæus, 111; 2. Theophilus of Antioch, 123; 3. Clement of Alexandria, 125; 4. Tertullian, 132; 5. Caius, 150;

7 Ibid. p. 382—390. — The Alogi, a sect that existed in the second century, are said to have rejected it. But we have no information concerning these Alogi that can be depended on: for, properly speaking, we have none else besides the later and uncertain accounts of Philastrius and Epiphanius. And were the case otherwise, still what can the testimony, or rather the bare assertion of anonymous persons avail, when opposed to the unanimous, considerate, and weighty evidences of all the ancients, both learned and unlearned. See Walch's History of Hereticks, vol. i. p. 569, sq. of the original; and Professor Schroeckh's Eccles. Hist. vol. iii. p. 175. seq. of the original.

N

6. Origen,

6. Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients noticed by Eusebius, 169.

It would appear that this is also testified by Ignatius, 78; Polycarp, 82; and the Communities at Lyons and Vienne, 141.

VI. *The first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*

IS considered as genuine by, 1. Clement of Rome, 51; 2. Polycarp, 80; 3. Tatian, 137; 4. Irenæus, 111; 5. Athénagoras, 119; 6. Clement of Alexandria, 125; 7. Tertullian, 132; 8. Caius, 150; 9. Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients found in Eusebius, 169.

To the class of probable witnesses belongs Ignatius, 78.

VII. *The Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*

HAS the express testimony of Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125;

the New Testament. 197

125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and of all the ecclesiastical fathers to whom Eusebius appeals, 169.

VIII. *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*

IS declared to be authentic by Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients found in Eusebius, 169.

IX. *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians*

HAS the testimony of Ignatius, 71; Polycarp, 81; Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and of all the primitive writers found in Eusebius, 169.

**X. *The Epistle of St. Paul to the
Philippians***

HAS the evidence of Polycarp, 79; Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and of all the Ancients noticed by Eusebius, 169.

And also, as appears probable, of the Communities at Lyons and Vienne, 141.

**XI. *The Epistle of St. Paul to the
Colossians***

IS attested by Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the ecclesiastical fathers consulted by Eusebius, 169.

**XII. *The First Epistle of St. Paul to
the Thessalonians***

IS expressly pronounced by Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian,

Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients mentioned by Eusebius, 169;

Probably also by Polycarp, 78:

XIII. *The Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Theſſalonians,*

by Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients found in Eusebius, 169;

Perhaps by Polycarp, 78:

XIV. *The First Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy,*

by Irenæus, 111; Theophilus of Antioch, 123; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the primitive writers noticed by Eusebius, 169;

And, with some degree of probability, by Polycarp, 82:

XV. *The Second Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy,*

by Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the Fathers found in Eusebius, 169:

XVI. *The Epistle of St. Paul to Titus,*

by Irenæus, 111; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients mentioned by Eusebius, 169—to be genuine works of this Apostle.

XVII. *The Epistle of St. Paul to Philemon*

IS but rarely mentioned by the ecclesiastical fathers in their writings, on account of its brevity and peculiar contents. Nevertheless, Irenæus, 109; Caius, 150; Origen, 155; and all the Ancients

Ancients cited by Eusebius, 169; have pronounced it authentic.

Which is also testified, apparently, by Tertullian, 128.

XVIII. *The First Epistle of St. Peter*

IS attested by Papias, 87; Irenæus, 112; Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian, 132; Origen, 155; and by all the Ancients found in Eusebius, 169.

To these may be added, perhaps, Polycarp, 82.

XIX. *The Second Epistle of St. Peter*

HAS the evidence of Origen, 155, who nevertheless speaks in some degree doubtfully; and of the *greater part* of the Ancients consulted by Eusebius, 170².

* See Lardner's Supplement, vol. iii. p. 215—224. 1st ed. and Michaelis' Introduction to the N. T. vol. iv. p. 346—356. of the learned Mr. Marsh's translation.

XX. *The First Epistle of St. John*

IS declared genuine by Papias, 87 ; Irenæus, 112 ; Clement of Alexandria, 125 ; Tertullian, 132 ; Origen, 155 ; and by all the Ancients found in Eusebius, 169.

XXI. XXII. *The Second and Third Epistles of St. John.*

ORIGEN, 155 ; and many of the Ancients, 169, doubted of the authenticity of the second and third Epistles of St. John. But the *majority of voices*, 170, pronounced them genuine works of this Apostle *.

XXIII. *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews*

HAS the express testimony of Clement of Alexandria, 125 ; Tertullian,

* For the three Epistles of St. John, see Lardner's Supplement, vol. iii. p. 263—267. 1st edit. And for the two last, Michaelis' Introduc. to the N. T. vol. iv. p. 442—445. of Mr. Marsh's translation.

132; and of all the primitive writers, noticed by Eusebius, 169.

To these may be added Clement of Rome, 51; and Justin Martyr, 101.

XXIV. *The Epistle of St. James*

IS attested by the *major part* of the Ancients whom Eusebius quotes 170; to which the concordant testimony of the old Syriac Version adds considerable weight^b.

XXV. *The Epistle of St. Jude*

IS asserted to be genuine by Clement of Alexandria, 125; Tertullian 132; Origen, 155; and by the *greater part* of the Ancients noticed by Eusebius, 170^c.

^b See Michaelis' Introduc. to the N. T. vol. iv. p. 308—314. of Mr. Marsh's translation; and Lardner's Supp. vol. iii. p. 85—91. 1st edit.

^c Compare Lardner's Supplement, vol. iii. p. 327—384. with Michaelis' Introduc. vol. iv. p. 374—395. of Mr. Marsh's translation.

CHAP. V.

Of the Revelation of St. John.

THE Revelation of St. John, as it is called, is so much distinguished from all the other writings of the New Testament, both by its contents and style, that we must separate it from them, and investigate its authenticity in a particular inquiry.

SECT. I.

The Contents of this Book.

THE whole book is entirely occupied with the description of three visions which were shewn to the author. First; there appears to him, whilst in a trance (ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι)^d One, in human form, surrounded with seven

^d Chap. i. 10. Comp. chap. iv. 2.

candlesticks,

candlesticks, clad in a long robe, and girt with a golden girdle ; his head and hair were white as wool, or as snow, and his eyes like flames of fire ; his feet like molten metal, and his voice like the noise of a rapid torrent ; in his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance shone like the sun in its meridian splendor. This Being dictates to him Epistles to the presidents of the seven Christian communities in Asia. These seven epistles contain many forcible exhortations to zeal in virtue or brotherly-love, and powerful consolations, especially for the martyrs to this virtue. But they are composed almost entirely from passages of the Old Testament and the Gospels.

Afterwards, (second vision)* the author falls into another trance ; and sees the Almighty on a majestic throne,

* Chap. iv—xix.

holding

holding in his hands a book with seven seals; and Christ, in the form of a Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes, who is alone capable of taking this book from the hands of God, and of opening its seals^f.—He opens the first seal, and the Conqueror appears^g: he opens the second, and War comes on the earth^h: the third, and Famine displays itselfⁱ: the fourth is opened, and immediately come forth Death and the Grave^k. After opening the fifth seal, those who had been innocently slain call for revenge^l: when the sixth is opened, frightful appearances are seen, and all things tremble^m. But these plagues are only the forerunners of the terrible calamity which succeeds on the opening of the seventh seal. Wherefore, be-

^f Chap. iv. v.^k Chap. vi. 7, 8.^g Chap. vi. 1, 2.^l Chap. vi. 9, 10.^h Chap. vi. 3, 4.^m Chap. vi. 12—17.ⁱ Chap. vi. 5, 6.

fore

fore this circumstance takes place, the servants of God, who are destined to escape this dreadful calamity, are marked by an angel on the forehead; an hundred and forty-four thousand, twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The writer now beheld an innumerable multitude out of every nation standing before the throne and the Lamb, in white garments, with palms in their hands, and crying with a loud voice, "Salvation to our God who sitteth on the throne! and unto the Lamb!" These were come out of great tribulation, and had washed and purified their garments in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they stand before the throne of God, serve him day and night in his temple, and He who sitteth on the throne covereth them as with a pavilion; they no more hunger nor thirst; neither the sun nor any other heat incommodes them; they are pastured by
the

the Lamb, who conducts them to the fountains of life, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes. After this Epifode^a follows—the opening of the seventh seal. And, lo!

Seven angels with seven trumpets appear^b. The sighs of the saints resound before the throne of God; immediately these seven angels make themselves ready. The first sounds; and instantly hail and fire mixed with blood, fall on the earth. The other angels sound successively;—and a great mountain as it were burning with fire is cast into the sea, the third part of the sea becomes bitter, and a third part of the creatures therein die: a star, named Wormwood, falls from heaven^c: the third part of the sun, of the moon, and of the stars is darkened^d: a star falls from heaven, and to him is given the key of the bottom-

^a Chap. vii.

^b Chap. viii. 10, 11.

^c Chap. viii.—xiv.

^d Chap. viii. 12.

less pit, which he opens; the four angels, which were bound by the river Euphrates, are loosed: a woman, clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, is in travail, and is delivered, &c.—At last the seventh trumpet sounds; and now are made various great and terrible preparations (in the long episode, Chap. x—xiv). An angel commands St. John to write down every thing he beheld; another gives him a book to swallow, &c. A woman in particular appears, clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. She is in travail. And, behold! a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads; whose tail drew away the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them on the earth. It placed itself before the woman in order to devour her child.

* Chap. ix. 1, 2.

* Chap. ix. 14.

But

But she brought forth a son who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. The woman then fled into the wilderness. But in heaven commences a war. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, who is Satan, and his angels. Michael conquers, and the dragon is cast on the earth. Now two frightful beasts arose against the woman, her son; and their followers. The first, extremely hideous, was like a leopard, his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion. The other had two horns as of a lamb; his number was six hundred three score and six, &c. Afterwards the author saw a white cloud, and upon it sat He, in human form^t, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand^u. There arises a great commotion in heaven. And then appear

^t See above, p. 186.

^u Chap. xiv. 14, and following verses.

Seven angels with seven vials full of the wrath of God*, which are poured out successively; almost in the same manner and with the same effects as happened before, when the seven trumpets were sounded. After all the seven had been poured out, there appeared a woman, sitting on a beast; clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls; in her hand she held a golden cup full of abominations, and the filthiness of her fornications; and upon her forehead was her name thus written, 'Mystery! Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth!' Babylon the Great is destroyed; on which event heaven resounds with songs of praise. And now He, who with his heavenly armies had caused the destruction of Babylon, returns to heaven.—This section is almost entirely composed of images and ex-

* Chap. xv—xix.

pressions from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

Again (third vision*), an angel came down from heaven, who had the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain. He laid hold on the dragon, who is Satan, and bound him. Thus bound, he cast him into the bottomless pit, where he was to remain a thousand years; and after that be loosed again for a short time. Thrones appear; and they to whom a power of judgment is committed, seated themselves thereon. The souls of those who had been slain on account of the doctrine of Jesus revived, and ruled with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years had expired. This was the first resurrection. After the expiration of the thousand years, Satan will be loosed from his imprisonment, and

* Chap. xx.—end of the book.

seduce

seduce the nations which are in the four ends of the earth.—Then he beheld a white throne, and He sat thereon from whose look earth and heaven fled. The dead, great and small, stand before the throne; books are opened, according to which they are to be judged. One book, in particular, is opened¹, the book of life; and whoever was not found written therein was cast into the lake of fire, together with Death and the Grave.—Now appeared to him a new heaven, and a new earth. And he beheld the holy city, the new Jerusalem, come down out of heaven from God: its wall was of jasper; the city itself, pure gold; each of its twelve foundations was a precious stone, jasper, sapphire, &c.; each of its twelve gates a pearl²; and the streets of gold.

¹ Chap. xx. 12, and following verses.

² ὁ μαργαρίτης means in the Chaldee not only a *pearl*, but likewise a *precious stone*; see Buxtorf lex. talmud. in v. But here it is expressly distinguished from the precious stones, καθ' τιμὴν, chap. xxi. 21, comp. ver. 19, 20.

But no temple was there; for God and the Lamb are its temple*.—The groundwork of the imagery here also is taken chiefly from Isaiah and Ezekiel; but the poetical dress in which it is clad, the precious stones, pearls, &c. is the author's own production.

The book concludes with this assertion, "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, Come Lord Jesus."

* Chap. xxi. 22, and following verses.

SECT. II.

*The Interpretation of the Book of
Revelation.*

NEVER did a book exist on whose contents such different opinions have been formed. In the earlier times of Christianity, when its followers were persecuted by the Roman Emperours, the Revelation was considered as a prophecy of the speedy destruction of Gentile Rome. Irenæus^b thought that the number 'six hundred three score and six.' indicated ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ. How it was understood after Christianity itself had ascended the imperial throne in the person of Constantine, is unknown. But when the Romish Bishops had erected the horrid

^b *Advers. hæres.* v. 26. 30.

^c See above, p. 192.

system of papal tyranny^d, and tormented and murdered all that opposed it,

^d In the sixth century the bishops of Rome made pretensions to the sovereignty over the whole world, as a right bestowed upon them by God, from being, as they asserted, the successors of St. Peter, and the vicars of Christ. In the eighth, from the grants of Pepin and Charlemagne, they became temporal lords. In the ninth, they placed themselves on an equality with princes and emperours, and in some cases claimed the superiority; now it was that they published, if they did not forge, the *Decretales*, and *Donatio Constantini Magni*. The eleventh century brought this infamous usurpation to its maturity. Hildebrand, a blacksmith's son, who, on being raised to the papal see, took the name of Gregory the Seventh, summoned the emperor Henry the Fourth to appear at Rome under the penalty of ecclesiastical censures; and on his not appearing, pronounced him excommunicated, and released all his subjects from their oath of fidelity. The emperor was at length obliged to comply; but was not received again into the pale of the Church until he had stood barefoot and without nourishment during three days in the castle of Canossa, where the pope then resided, and had humbly prayed for favour. Lastly, since the thirteenth century, they exercised sovereign authority over all the monarchs of the West: pope Innocent the Third deposed the emperor Otto the Fourth, and compelled John, king of England, to make

it, Joachim, an abbot in Calabria, during the thirteenth century, pointed the book against the Pope. The Franciscans, on being oppressed by the papal see, followed him. Many of the Protestants eagerly embraced this opinion; and since that time it is become the ruling sentiment among this class of Christians. On the other hand, the Romish church has retaliated, and discovered in it Luther, Calvin, or some one or other of the reformers: nor have there been wanting men, who have fancied that they perceived allusions even to Mahomet. Innumerable are the individual interpretations which have been given in modern times. The afflicted Protestants in Hungary and Bohemia, during the persecutions which were excited against them in the seventeenth century, per-

make his kingdom tributary to the Romish see. See Mornæi *Mysterium Iniquitatis*; and Cyprian, *History of Popery*.

ceived many prophecies therein which afforded them much consolation. Some imagine it to be a perfect history of the Christian church, from its commencement even to the end of the world.—Many learned men, and among these Luther and Calvin, have never attempted an exposition, because they considered it a fruitless labour. Others, lastly, (Wetstein and D'Aubitz in particular) have explained it as indicating the destruction of the Jewish state and divine-service. And if any interpretation has the slightest degree of light and probability, it is this*.

SECT.

* I will here present the reader with the heads of this interpretation ;—1. *Christ takes the book, with seven seals from the hand of God*, chap. iy. v ; i. e. he is commissioned by God to destroy the state and divine worship of the Jews. 2. *Seven angels successively sound their trumpets*, chap. viii.—xiv. ; i. e. terrible events precede the destruction. 3. *Seven vials, filled with the wrath of God are poured out by seven angels*, chap. xv.—xix. i. e. that utter destruction is now carried into execution.

4. *Christ*

SECT. III.

Remarks on its Contents.

1. IT stands perfectly insulated in the bible.—Even from the slightest perusal, it will clearly appear, that this book is entirely different from all the other writings not only of the New Testament, but also of the Old. In the other books of the New Testament historical matters and doctrines are

4. *Christ comes again; the dead are raised.* *Rev.* chap. xx.—xxiii. i. e. after the coming of Christ to hold judgment on Jerusalem, he will appear again in due time to judge the whole world.—In examining this *poetical* book, we must be governed by the same rules as we adopt when we endeavour to explain the work of any other poet—we must attribute a distinct meaning only to the principal images, and consider all the other separate features of the different images as merely poetical ornaments and amplification. Agreeably to this, book, seal, seven seals, trumpets, seven trumpets, &c. have in themselves no particular meaning, but are all nothing more than the poetical dress of the principal images.

delivered

delivered in the common language of men: there exists nothing of divine revelations shewn in a trance through figures, except in the passage of the Acts of the Apostles, x. 3—7; and even here the explanation is immediately subjoined^f. The Prophets of the Old Testament indeed have delivered their doctrines frequently in visions; their writings often contain those of a similar nature. But entire and mere vision like this, without any subjoined explanation, exists in no book whatever of the bible, except in the Apocalypse.

2. The author is a person called John; but whether the Apostle of that name or not, he does not inform us.—The writer calls himself repeatedly John, not only in the preface of the book^g, but frequently also in other

^f In the 8th and following verses.

^g Chap. i. i.

places^a where it might have been by no means expected. He professes himself a servant of Jesus Christ^b; and a teacher of his religion^c; and asserts that he had been on the island of Patmos on account of the confession of the doctrine of Jesus^d. But whether to preach it there, or banished for having preached it, he does not disclose. And here, in a trance, he saw these visions. But he never suffers even a single word to escape him by which we might be enabled to discover that he was the Apostle of the same name. He never, like the Evangelist, calls himself 'the disciple whom Jesus loved, who leaned on his bosom at supper^e.' Not a trace of the Apostle's favourite figures and expressions,

^a Chap. i. 4. 9. xxii. 3.

^b Chap. i. 4.

^c Chap. i. 2.

^d Chap. ii. 9.

^e For instance, John xiii.

Light, Life, &c. is to be found here.—On the contrary, the frequent mention of his name is at perfect variance with the custom of the Apostle, who never names himself either in his Gospel or Epistles.

3. The book contains many fine passages.—Notwithstanding its impenetrable obscurity, we meet with some noble passages, distinguished both for their matter and composition. Besides what has been said above concerning the seven epistles to the Christian communities, we may add, that however ignorant we are to what the destruction in chap. vi. 12—17: alludes, the painting is very sublime. Animated and affecting is the description of the bliss of the heroic workers of virtue, chap. vii. 9—17: and majestic is the account of the redemption of the human race through Jesus, chap. xii. 7—12.

4. It is inexplicable, at least at present.—Of what it treats; whether it
be

be a narration or a prophecy; whether it relate to near circumstances, or remote; whether it consist of one whole, or of many unconnected parts; whether all of it, or nothing be already fulfilled; what may be the meaning of the mysterious numbers, 'a time, and times, and half a time'; of the significant number, 'six hundred, three score and six'; the thousand years^a, &c.; of the frightful beasts and monsters^b; in a word, of the entire contents—is most indeterminate and obscure. After the inquiries and assertions of many centuries, we can ascertain of its meaning—absolutely nothing. We become confused and disgusted when we dive into expositions so numerous, various, and contradictory. And the Revelation, after all that the learned and unlearned, fa-

^a Chap. xii. 14.

^b Cap. xiii. 18.

^c Chap. xx. 4, and following verses.

^d See above, p. 192.

natics;

natics and men of sound understanding, have said and dreamt concerning it, still remains—a sealed book. This is the opinion of all, who, from modest distrust of their own penetration, have consulted, I will not say all the interpreters of this book—for that is absolutely impossible—but even a moderate part of them. The late professor Brucker, for instance, says in one of his works, ‘that he had read a very considerable number of the expositors of this figurative and mystical book, and found incredible contradictions and confusion.’

5. Many things in it appear to be erroneous and unchristian.—For how shall we harmonize that joy and triumph with which the horrid punishment of their enemies was viewed and published by the saints, with the mild, conciliatory, charitable, and enemy-loving spirit, which exists in the whole New Testament, and particularly in the
the

the writings of St. John, which breathe, as it were, nothing but forgiveness and benevolence?—Again, the writer of this book offers at two different times to adore an angel, in the most exact sense of the word, to adore as God. And that not only in the vision^r, but also^s in the usual, natural condition of the mind. It is highly improbable that any thing of this kind would be done by a Jew, and yet more improbable by a Christian, but absolutely impossible by an Apostle, nay, by him, who was the most intimate friend of Jesus!—We will pass over the error, as it appears to be, which is met with, chap. xx. 8, where the town or kingdom Magog^t, (from Ezekiel xxxviii. 2,) is supposed to be a man; because critics are still in doubt as to

^r Chap. xix. 9, 10.

^s Chap. xxii. 8, 9.

^t Magog, a city, or a kingdom; Gog, the prince of Magog.

the right interpretation of this passage of Ezekiel.—Also, in judging of this book, we cannot with propriety say any thing of its numerous grammatical errors, since our present text is extremely defective. And to this subject I will now proceed.

SECT. IV.

Of our common text of the Revelation.

OF this book, when compared with the other scriptures of the New Testament, very few manuscripts and ancient versions, and a very small number of extracts in the works of the ancient teachers, are come down to us. About four manuscripts only have any value; the rest are new and worthless. Of these four there are but two complete. Until the time of Wetstein, three manuscripts alone had been collated; and since him very few, collated with ac-

curacy, have been added to the number. Erasmus, who could make use of one Greek manuscript only, translated the greater part of it from the Vulgate; he even made many alterations purely conjectural. From this edition of Erasmus, our common text of the Revelation of St. John is for the most part a copy. Destitute therefore of credible manuscripts, versions, and other writings of high antiquity, amidst a multitude of omissions, transpositions, additions, and alterations, we cannot settle the genuine reading. The text of this book is consequently uncertain, even in the best editions*.

* See the Editions of the New Testament by Wettstein and Griesbach; and Semler's *Theologische Hermeneutik*; IV. 264.

SECT. V.

*The Opinion of Ancient Writers on
this Book.*

THE scarcity of critical aid, and, a necessary consequence, the uncertainty of the text, will not astonish us, if we revert to antiquity, and inquire what opinion the ancients had of the Revelation. In the two first centuries this book was rejected by Christian teachers of great respectability. Papias^v, even if he had not been, as Irenæus has asserted, a disciple of St. John himself, was certainly a contemporary of this Apostle, and indeed Bishop of Hierapolis, a town in the vicinity of Ephesus, the place of residence of the Apostle, and of the seven Asiatic communities to which the Apocalypse contains epistles. Now

^v See above, p. 84.

this

this Father, whose evidence would be of such great importance in the present inquiry, has not mentioned the Revelation: for Eusebius quotes nothing from him^x, which he certainly would not have omitted, had he been able, he himself being perfectly in doubt as to its authenticity. Indeed Papias overlooks in his works some other books of the New Testament. But he had not so much reason to notice other books as this, since he was the father of the doctrine of the Millennium (the opinion that Christ would reign upon earth a thousand years after the resurrection of the righteous), which doctrine has always been grounded by all its supporters on the Apocalypse. Eusebius even says^y, "That Papias was deluded into the opinion of a Millennium from an uncertain tradition, and by misunderstanding the apos-

^x See above, p. 85.

^y Hist. Eccl. iii. 39.

tolical narrations," (*diagnos*, consequently not apostolical writings). Therefore he—either *did not know* of the *Apocalypse*,—or *did not receive it as an apostolical and divine scripture*².

Caius³, an orthodox and very learned presbyter of the church of Rome, in the second century, asserted even that Cerinthus, in order to establish the coarse doctrine of the Millennium, had falsely attributed it to the Apostle St. John. "Caius in his Disputation says," (these are the words of Eusebius, E. H. III. 28, for of the writings of Caius none are now extant) "Cerinthus, by the help of revelations which he in-

² This is acknowledged by Dr. Storr, a very learned and acute defender of the authenticity and divinity of this book, in his 'New Apology for the Revelation of St. John,' p. 176 of the Original.—The testimony of Andrew, Bishop of Cæsarea, in the sixth century, of whom we know little or nothing, cannot be produced as a proof in opposition to Eusebius: it is moreover obscure. See Dr. Storr, p. 175.

³ See above; p. 150.

finuated

sinuated to have been written by a great Apostle^b, imposes upon us a variety of wonderful relations, which he pretends were shewn to him by angels^c, and asserts, that after the resurrection, Christ's palace shall be on earth^d, and that the flesh (men with carnal bodies) shall dwell again at Jerusalem, and indulge in pleasures and sensual appetites. This enemy of the divine scriptures says also, in order to deceive, (θελων πλανᾶν) that a thousand years shall be spent in nuptial feasts^e. —The great Apostle, by whom the revelations are pretended to have been

^b Δι' αποκαλυψαν ὡς ὑπο Αποστολῆς μεγαλῆ γεγονυῖαν. Dionysius of Alexandria also calls the book αποκαλυψεις, in the plural. Eusebii Histor. Eccl. VII. 25. p. 354. edit. Reading.

^c Τετρατολογίας ἡμιν, ὡς δι' Ἀγγέλων αὐτῶν δεδογμένας ψευδομένης.

^d The words in the original are, το βασιλειον, and not την βασιλειαν; it must not therefore be rendered, as is done by the Latin translator, regnum Christi. The palace of Christ is the New Jerusalem, chap. xx.

^e αριθμοι χιλιονταετίας ἐν γάμῳ ἱερῆς γινισθαι.

written; the wonderful things shewn to him by angels; the palace of Christ on earth, after the resurrection, at Jerusalem; the marriage feasts; and the dominion which is to endure for a thousand years, are visibly taken from the Apocalypse. One of the most eloquent defenders of its authenticity confesses himself, that Caius speaks of this book, and not of any other work, as that which Cerinthus had written under the title, *αποκαλυψις*^f. This becomes still more certain, as Dionysius of Alexandria expressly says^g, that some of the ancients had attributed the book to Cerinthus.

It is this Dionysius who excites in every reflecting and impartial reader the greatest doubt concerning the authenticity of the Apocalypse. He was born at Alexandria, of Gentile pa-

^f See Dr. Storr, *New Apology for the Revelation of St. John*.

^g Eusebius, *H. E.* VII. 25.

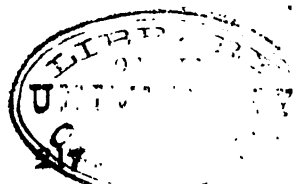
rents,

rents, his extensive reading led him to Christianity, he became the disciple of Origen, then a presbyter, and lastly, about the year 248, Bishop of the Christian community in his native city. His deep penetration and great knowledge of the world, united with the most amiable character, placed him in a condition to do what no one ever has done either before or after him. He held a religious controversy with the followers of Nepos (an Egyptian Bishop then lately deceased, who had taught the Millennarian doctrine), which not only produced no bad consequences, but, on the contrary, convinced his opponents, and inclined them to abandon their error^a. It is evident from his writings, of which, except two, only fragments preserved in Eusebius are come down to us, and from his life which the same his-

^a Eusebius Hist. Eccles. VII. 24.

torian relates¹, that he was a man of distinguished talents, very extensive learning, sound judgment, and what is of the greatest importance, of most excellent character. His amiable modesty and meekness in particular won the hearts of all who knew him intimately; his learning and penetration, united with a fine eloquence, gave him such consequence, that it was customary to choose him umpire in almost all disputes; and by posterity he has been named the Great Dionysius. — Against the fore-mentioned Nepos (who understood the passages concerning the coming of Christ, especially those in the Apocalypse, literally; and in a particular book which he wrote, ‘A Confutation of the Allegorists’ *ελεγχος αλληρογιστων*, founded on this hypothesis the coarse doctrine of the Millennium), he composed a

¹ Hist. Eccles. VI. 29. 35. 40. 42—44. 46. VII. 1. 4—11. 20—28.



work, 'Concerning the promises,' *περὶ επαγγελίων*, in two books. In the second, he treats at large of the Apocalypse. The extracts which Eusebius* gives from it, are worthy of being introduced here, for they contain not only much important information and sound criticism on the Revelation; but afford us also a good idea of the learning and mode of thinking of its author, and of the care with which the primitive Christians were accustomed to scrutinize the writings which made any pretensions to be apostolical. "Some of the Ancients" (says Dionysius) "have entirely rejected this book; refuted it section by section; shewing it to be throughout unintelligible and inconsistent. They assert also, that the title is false, since this is neither a work of St. John, nor even a Revelation (*ἀποκαλύψις*),

* Hist. Eccles. VII. 25.

"because

“ because every thing in it is hidden
 “ under a coarse and thick veil. They
 “ suppose, that not only no Apostle,
 “ but no pious member of the church,
 “ was its author; but ascribe it to
 “ Cerinthus, and the sects called after
 “ his name, who were desirous of
 “ giving credit to his errors, by affixing
 “ to them a respectable name. For
 “ from him originated the doctrine,
 “ that the kingdom of Christ should
 “ be temporal, consisting of those
 “ things to which he himself, a totally
 “ sensual and carnal man, was most
 “ addicted; viz. the satiating of the
 “ belly, and the gratification of fleshly
 “ lusts, by eating, drinking, marrying,
 “ by feasts and feast-offerings. But I
 “ will not venture *to reject the book*,
 “ since many of the brethren highly
 “ esteem it¹; for I believe that its
 “ contents

¹ Dionysius appeals here, 1st, to the testimony of
 some of the ancients, *τινὲς τῶν προ ἡμῶν*; and 2dly, to
 that

“ contents surpass my comprehension,
 “ are concealed and wonderful. Al-
 “ though I do not understand it, yet I
 “ suppose that the words have a cer-
 “ tain hidden meaning. I do not
 “ measure and judge of it *by my own*
 “ *reason*, but *follow the faith*, and
 “ consider it above my intellect. I do
 “ not reject what I do not compre-
 “ hend, but admire it the more, be-
 “ cause I do not understand it.”

‘ After

that of many of his contemporaries, “ many of them,” says he, “ highly esteem it :”—consequently, not all. It is difficult therefore to say, with Dr. Storr, (*New Apology for the Revelation of St. John*, p. 50, of the original), that Dionysius only disputes and conjectures, but does not appeal to historical arguments.

“ The various turns which the author here takes; the indeterminate, obscure assertions, which he makes; and the express appeal to the brethren, who highly esteem the Apocalypse; shew, as it appears to me, clearly, that, in this place, he delivers, from tenderness to those of different sentiments, not his whole opinion. ‘ On the contents of the book he neither could nor would decide, since he understood nothing of it:’ this, I believe, is the sense of this prolix passage. What immediately

‘ After this (continues Eusebius) he examines the whole work, shews that according to the common use of language it is impossible to understand it (*αδυνατόν αὐτῇν κατὰ τὴν κοινὴν νομοθεσίαν διαλεσθαι*), and then adds, “ After having
 “ ended what is called the prophecy;
 “ the prophet pronounces those blessed
 “ who keep it, and also himself—
 “ *Blessed is he, who keepeth the sayings*
 “ *of the prophecy of this book ; and I*
 “ *John, who saw and heard these*
 “ *things.* That he therefore was
 “ called John, and that this book
 “ came from a certain John, I will not
 “ deny ; I even confess that it was
 “ written by *some holy man*, and by
 “ *divine inspiration*, *αὐτῇς ὡς καὶ τῶν καὶ*
 “ *θεοπνευστῶν ἐννοεῖται.* Nevertheless I can-
 “ not easily acknowledge, that this
 “ John was *the Apostle, the son of,*
 “ *Zebedee, the brother of James*, whose

mediately follows will hardly permit us to entertain a doubt on the subject.

“ *name*

"name is affixed to the Gospel and
 "Catholic Epistle. For I conclude"
 "from the design and style of the dif-
 "ferent works, and from what is called
 "the arrangement of the book (*α. τ. ς.*
 "*το βιβλίον διατάχεται λογικῶς*), that they
 "were not from one and the same
 "person. For the Evangelist never
 "introduces his name, or makes him-
 "self known either in the Gospel or
 "in the Epistle."—In the sequel
 (adds Eusebius) he proceeds in this
 manner, "St. John nowhere speaks
 "of himself, either directly, or as of a
 "third person. On the contrary, the
 "author of the Apocalypse places his
 "name at the very beginning, *The*
 "*Revelation of Jesus Christ, which*
 "*God gave unto him, to shew unto his*
 "*servants things which must shortly*

"These internal reasons determine the decision of
 Dionysius; the former opinions and evidences of an-
 tiquity having left him in doubt. The *την μαρτυρίαν*
α. τ. ς. λ. do not entirely exclude historical reasons
 also.

"come

“ come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant
 “ John, who bare record of the word
 “ of God, and of the testimony of
 “ Jesus Christ, and of all things that
 “ he saw. In the epistle at the commencement of this book, he begins,
 “ John to the seven churches which
 “ are in Asia; grace be unto you and
 “ peace. But the Evangelist has not prefixed his name to the catholic Epistle;
 “ on the contrary, he begins without circumlocution, concerning the mystery
 “ of the divine revelation, *That which*
 “ *was from the beginning, which we*
 “ *have heard, which we have seen with*
 “ *our eyes, &c.* And for the like revelation the Lord pronounced Peter
 “ blessed; saying, *Blessed art thou*
 “ *Simon, Son of Jonas, for flesh and*
 “ *blood have not revealed it unto you,*
 “ *but my father who is in heaven.*
 “ Nor in the second or third Epistles
 “ attributed to him, though indeed they
 “ are

“ are short epistles, is the name of
“ John prefixed, but only the title of
“ the Elder. But this other man (the
“ author of the Apocalypse) was not
“ contented with naming himself once,
“ but repeats it often, *I John, &c.*;
“ and at the end he says, *Blessed is he*
“ *that keepeth the sayings of the pro-*
“ *phesy of this book; and I John,*
“ *who saw these things and heard*
“ *them.* Therefore that a person
“ named John was the author of this
“ book ought to be credited. But who
“ he was is uncertain. For he neither
“ says, agreeably to the language of
“ the Gospel, that he is the Disciple
“ whom the Lord loved; nor He, who
“ leaned on his breast; nor, The bro-
“ ther of James; nor, He who had
“ himself seen and heard the Lord.
“ Whereas he would have introduced
“ some expressions of this kind, if he
“ had intended that we should know
“ who was the writer. But this is
not

“not the case.—Now many writers
“called John, I believe, have ex-
“isted. — — — Also it is probable
“from the sentiments, and words, and
“their construction, that this man (the
“author of the Apocalypse) was a
“different person from him (the
“Apostle). For the Gospel and
“Epistle have a certain similarity;
“they begin in the same manner; the
“former says, *In the beginning was*
“*the word*; and the latter, *That which*
“*was from the beginning*; the former
“says, *And the word was made flesh*
“*and dwelt among us, and we beheld*
“*his glory, a glory as of the only*
“*begotten of the Father*; and the lat-
“ter the very same, with this trifling
“variation, *Which we have heard, which*
“*we have seen, and our hands have*
“*handled of the word of life.* — —
“Again, we find in both much of
“Life; Light; Avoiding of darkness;
“Truth, Grace, Joy, the Flesh and the
“Blood

" blood of the Lord; Judgment, For-
" giveness of sins, The love of God to-
" wards us, The command of love one
" towards another; The necessity of
" keeping all the commandments; The
" judgment of the world, of the Devil,
" of Antichrist; The promise of the
" Holy-Ghost; The adoption of God;
" Unlimited faith; The Father and the
" Son. — — But the style of the Apo-
" calypse is very different from this,
" it is dissimilar in almost every point:
" —Further, the Apocalypse neither
" mentions the Epistle, nor the Epistle
" the Apocalypse.—The Language also
" of the Gospel and Epistle is very
" different from that of the Apoca-
" lypse. For the Greek of the former
" is not only void of grammatical
" errors, but there is an elegance in
" the expressions, the argument, and
" contexture of the discourse; and we
" do not discover either a barbarism,
" a solecism, or even an idiomatical

“ expression.—As to the other, he who
 “ saw the Apocalypse, may perhaps
 “ have received wisdom and prophecy;
 “ but the language is not good Greek,
 “ it is mixed with barbarisms and
 “ sometimes with solecisms. These I
 “ will not at present quote, as it is not
 “ my intention to ridicule, but to shew
 “ the dissimilarity of the writings.”

— — — Here then we have most important information concerning the Apocalypse. A scholar of high antiquity, who lived somewhat more than a hundred years after the Apostle St. John, and was then in high estimation for his knowledge and character; who has been in repute with all antiquity, and continues from the very fragments of his writings to obtain the respect of posterity;—this conscientious and learned

• This criticism of the language is somewhat overstrained. Neither is that of the Gospel and Epistle so pure, nor that of the Apocalypse so corrupt, as Dionysius has here represented it.

inquirer

inquirer was induced to doubt by the ' *testimony of some of the ancients,*' who considered this book not only as not apostolical, but even as worthless and erroneous. Notwithstanding, he would not absolutely reject it, since many of his contemporaries continued to esteem it: on the contrary, he confessed that it was a holy book, and inspired by God. He acknowledged this more from respect to the supporters of the Apocalypse, than from his own conviction; for its contents were to him obscure and incomprehensible. But thus much he asserted with confidence, that it was not written by the Apostle St. John, but by some other person of the same name: for the style and contents of the book prove it incontrovertibly.

The father of Christian ecclesiastical history represents the opinion of *antiquity* concerning the Apocalypse exactly in a similar manner, but more

determinately and clearly^p. "Of the
 " Revelation," says he^q, "*the majority*
 " are even yet" (after all the inquiries
 that had been then made) " still in
 " doubt;" that is, they reserved to
 themselves all decisive opinion on it,
 since they knew not whether they should
 consider the book as genuine or spu-
 rious. " Therefore," says he^r, " he
 " who chooses, may place the Apoca-
 " lypse among the Homologoumena"
 (the universally acknowledged). For
 at that time the book had many zealous
 supporters^s, who asserted its authen-
 ticity to be incontrovertible. Eusebius
 would not deprive those persons of
 their opinion, but nevertheless reminds
 them, that it was contradictory to his-
 tory, for *some* of the ancients had
 actually pronounced it *spurious*. (171 16

^p Hist. Eccles. III. 24, 25, and 39.

^q III. 24. p. 118. Reading.

^r III. 25. p. 119.

^s See above, p. 159.

η Ιωαννης αποκαλυψις, ει φανειη, ην τινες ως εφην αθετησιν, ετεροι δε εγκρινουσι τοις ομολογουμενοις.)

Such are the evidences against the authenticity of this book, with which its divinity is inseparably connected*. On the other side, it is supported by men of equal consequence. Justin Martyr^u, in the passage quoted above, to prove the doctrine of a Millennium, appeals to the Revelation of St. John the Apostle. Irenæus, who lived so near the time of the Apostles, and was also the scholar of Polycarp who had heard St. John himself^w, not only proves^x the approaching destruction of the Roman monarchy, the wickedness of

* One of the most moderate and impartial opponents of the authenticity of the Revelation of St. John is Michaelis, in his Introduction to the New Testament. See the very learned and very accurate Mr. Marsh's transf. vol. iv. p. 461.

^u See above, p. 103.

^w See above, p. 112.

^x Advers. Hæres. V. 26—end.

Antichrist, and the doctrine of a Millennium, from the Apocalypse, but also expressly asserts, that it was written almost in his (Irenæus's) own time, by St. John the Apostle; and appeals to manuscripts of this book, which were ancient and might be relied on, and which he had seen^y. Theophilus of Antioch^z, in one of his works now lost, had refuted erroneous doctrines by authorities from the Revelation of St. John; consequently, he thought it of divine inspiration. Clement of Alexandria^a likewise places it among the genuine and divine Scriptures. Tertullian^b, in proof of its divinity,

^y We cannot place Melito (see above, p. 138) among the evidences, for we only know, that he had written a book on the Revelation of John. See above, p. 139. But what the tenor of his book was; whether he held this John to be the Apostle, or some indifferent person; or, whether he received or rejected the book; we know not.

^z See above, 143.

^a See above, 125.

^b See above, 132.

appeals

appeals to the evidence of the communities established by the Apostles themselves. And an authority of the greatest weight, Origen^c, the most learned of all the Christian teachers; who had scrutinized the New Testament on true principles of criticism; and who was an enemy to the doctrine of a Millennium, he places the Revelation more than once among the writings of St. John the Apostle, and among the divine books of the New Testament^d. Jerom, the most learned of the Latin Fathers, is of the same opinion. He states^e that in his time, the latter part

^c See above, p. 155 f.

^d He appears to assert even, that not *a single one* of the ancients had doubted its genuineness. (See above, p. 160. (Note 1). But among the ancients, and especially among the fathers, we must not expect perfect logical precision; consequently, we must not take the expression of Origen in its strict sense. If this were actually his meaning, he was without doubt in an error, as is proved by the information of Dyonysius and Eusebius.

^e Ep. ad Dardanum.

of the fourth century, the Greek church rejected indeed this book, which was received by the Latin; but that he nevertheless esteemed it divine, because he relied rather on the credit of antiquity than on the custom of the times. Now as the Romish church even then (and still more since the sixth century), had begun to be considered the oracle of Christians, from that time therefore until the Reformation, the divinity of the Apocalypse has scarcely ever been further called in question^f.

^f See Lardner's Supplement, vol. iii. p. 356—364. of the first edition.—As well in respect of learning, as also of impartiality, the late Chancellor Reufs of Tübingen, and his son-in-law, Dr. Storr, are among the most considerable defenders of the Apocalypse: the former, in his 'Defence of the Revelation of St. John,' in answer to the objections of Dr. Semler, 1772, 8vo.; and the latter, in the 'New Apology for the Revelation of St. John,' Tübingen, 1783, in 8vo.—The history of the modern controversies on this subject may be seen in Walch's 'Latest History of Religion,' Part vii. p. 257, and following pages of the original.

SECT. V.

The true Value and Credit of the Book.

THE foregoing observations on its contents and history, lead us to the following decision on the book of Revelation. — It is undoubtedly very old; it was known as early as the beginning of the second century after Christ. But, it may be asked, what led so many and creditable men to receive it as an apostolical and divine Scripture? To this it may be answered, that its author was called John; and this, as appears probable, was the cause of its having been placed by these men among the divine Scriptures of the New Testament; they mistook him for the Apostle of the same name. Who he was, and where he lived, we know not: but the contents of the book clearly evince that he was a Christian teacher and a
pious

pious man. It contains also many passages distinguished both for matter and composition ; it has always been, and will always continue to be read by many with real advantage, as an excitement to virtue, and as affording means of consolation. But as we neither understand its contents, nor can depend with certainty on the present text as genuine, the use of it is only so far safe, as its contents agree with the other writings of the New Testament. Whether, lastly, the book was written by the *Apostle St. John*, or even by *any Apostle*, cannot be positively either asserted or denied.

CHAP. VI.

Conclusions drawn from the above-mentioned Testimonies.

AFTER having heard so many clear and weighty testimonies of antiquity, how is it possible for any intelligent and impartial man to assert, 'that the present Scriptures of the New Testament were not declared to be genuine and divine before the Council of Laodicea, which was held about the year 364?' The enemies of Christianity,—for these only make the assertion,—would consequently wish to insinuate to the world, that before the fourth century Christians were entirely divided in their opinions concerning the genuine Scriptures of the Apostles and Evangelists, and that at one time more, at another, fewer books were received under this title, until at length the decisive

cific sentence of the Council of Laodicea established the present Canon. The author of the 'Dictionnaire philosophique portatif' has lately brought this story again into notice. But if our adversaries would cast only a slight glance over the writings of the above-mentioned teachers of the first two centuries and a half, they would undoubtedly blush at their own ignorance and boldness.—Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, prove their tenets by authorities taken from these scriptures; and indeed from these *only*, rejecting all others as either forged, or merely human compositions. Many teachers of the first and second centuries mention a *collection* of the evangelical and apostolical writings as already existing. *All* the ancient writers whom Eusebius has cited, pronounce either unanimously or with a great majority of voices, these writings and *only* these,

to

to have been genuine works of the Evangelists and Apostles. Notwithstanding these circumstances, it is pretended that the first centuries were quite undecided and uncertain on this subject! Notwithstanding these circumstances, it is asserted, that the Council of Laodicea first established our present Canon*!

All the Scriptures of our New Testament, it is confessed, have not been received with *universal* consent as genuine works of the Evangelists and Apostles^b. But that man must have predetermined to oppose the most palpable truths, and must reject all history, who will not confess, that the *greater part* of the New Testament has been *universally* received as authentic, and that the remaining books have been acknowledged as such by

* This Canon of the Council is moreover spurious. See Prof. Spittler on this subject.

^b See above, p. 170.

the majority of the ancients; and, therefore, that *all our present books of the New Testament* (the Apocalypse perhaps excepted) have stronger proofs for their authenticity, than can be produced for any of the other writings of antiquity, for those of Xenophon, Polybius, Tacitus, or Cicero, which nevertheless are received as genuine with such confidence, that the whole world pronounced Hardouin insane, when he attempted to call their authenticity in question.—For, in the present case, we have not merely a single solitary witness or two, but a great variety. They name these scriptures not simply in a casual way, but relate their *history*, and make long *extracts* from them. These witnesses are men, who were intimately acquainted either with the *Evangelists* and *Apostles themselves*, or their *immediate* disciples; and lived at farthest not later than about *two generations* after their times. They
were

were very well versed in every kind of profane literature; they were *philosophers* and *scholars*, who had formed their taste, and sharpened their judgment by the study of the best writers of antiquity, of Homer, Euripides, Æschylus, Plato, and Aristotle; they were scholars, who had read with attention all the works of the Christian authors; who were also familiar with the *apochryphal writings* (of which, in the first century, existed but few¹), and after

¹ Even here the enemies of Christianity betray themselves. They confound all together; and mistake writings forged in much later times for works which were in circulation soon after the times of the Apostles under their names. Out of a single book, with different titles, they make many books. And through these effects of ignorance or dishonesty, the number of apochryphal works is magnified in such an amazing degree, that John Tolland in his *Amyntor* has filled many pages only with the bare names of them. This error has been most amply refuted by Mr. Jeremiah Jones, in his 'New and full method of settling the canonical authority of the New Testament,' London, 1726, 3 vol. 8vo. in which he goes through each of these

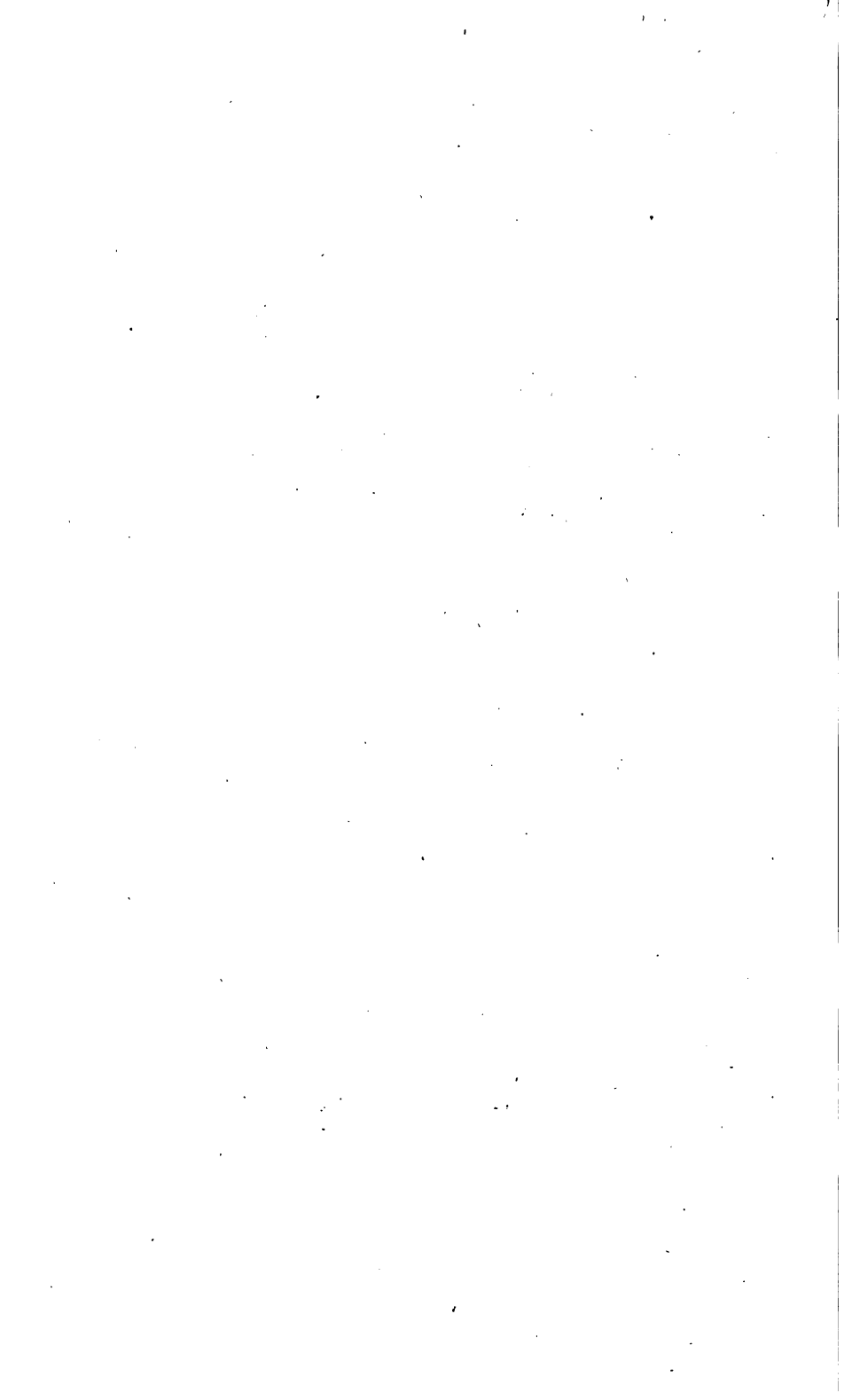
after accurate scrutiny, rejected them. They also *doubted* of the truth of *some* of the books of our New Testament, and thereby established an evident proof that they were by no means credulous. Some of them travelled in person purposely to examine into the truth of the books, which made pretensions to divine inspiration, received accurate information on this point from the communities planted by the Apostles themselves, and in their con-

these apochryphal works separately, and proves that the ancients rejected them as spurious, and pronounced the Scriptures of our New Testament exclusively to be the genuine works of the Evangelists and Apostles. And this is also testified by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles. Lib. III. cap. 25*) from his own knowledge of the earliest writings.—The major part of these apochryphal works were written in the fourth century. They all agree in essential matters with our New Testament; but they contain also a variety of fables. See these writings in Jo. Alb. Fabricii *Cod. Apocr. N. T. vol. iii. in 8vo. Comp.* Beausobre *Hist. du Manichéisme, Vol. ii.* and Lardner's *Credibility of the G. H. Part II. vol. xii. p. 157—174. first edition.*

traverſies

troverfies with the heretics appealed to them with confidence^k.

^k Lardner deserves the greateft credit for his labours on the proof of the authenticity of the New Testament. In the fecond part of his 'Credibility of the Gospel History,' (which was originally published in 12 vol. 8vo.) and in the 'Supplement' (in 3 vol.) he has collected the evidences of the Chriftian authors in a chronological order according to the centuries.



BOOK III.

THE UNCORRUPTED PRESERVATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAP. I.

The Books extant at present in the New Testament, are the same Writings which were originally composed by the Authors whose Names they bear.

BUT, it may perhaps be said, have not those books been long ago destroyed? Are not these which we have at present in the New Testament some of the writings which, in the early ages of Christianity, were falsely ascribed to the immediate disciples of Jesus? Or, how can we be assured, whether they are not so changed by latter *interpolations* and *erasures*, as to have become entirely

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different from the originals? — It is therefore necessary to shew, that these writings have descended to us unaltered, or, in other words, the uncorrupted preservation of our present New Testament.—And this I shall prove

I. *From their Contents.*

AS early as the two first centuries of the Christian era, we find the very same *facts* and the very same *doctrines* universally received by the Christians, which we, of the present day, believe on the credit of the New Testament.—That Jesus was born under the Roman emperor Augustus, and taught in the Jewish territory; that he publicly performed many and great miracles; was persecuted by his enemies the Jews, though innocent, even to death on the cross; and arose alive from the grave on the third day after his death; that a belief in this Jesus and his doctrine

is the only way to salvation for all those to whom they have been promulgated; that this same Jesus has published and ordained for his disciples the wisest and most salutary precepts in respect of our conduct towards God, towards ourselves, and towards our neighbour; that hereafter he will descend gloriously from heaven, into which he visibly ascended, in order to awaken the dead, and to judge the whole race of mankind:—all this is asserted in all the earliest writings of Christian antiquity¹ to have been the universal belief of Christians².—And

¹ See above, Part I. Book II. Ch. i.—iii.

² It is only necessary to read, for instance, the 19th and 20th ch. of Irenæus's fifth book *Adversus hæreses*, where he gives a short sketch of the Christian doctrine as it then existed.—The principal writings on this subject are, Dionysii Petravii *Dogmata Theologica*; Jacob Basnage *Histoire de l'Église*; Lardner *L. cit.*; and Dr. Semler's *Collections from the writings of the old teachers*, which he has prefixed to Baumgarten's *Dogmatic and Polemic*.

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all this likewise is contained in those books which we now possess under the names of the Evangelists and Apostles.

II.—*Because an universal corruption of these writings was impossible; nor can the least vestige of such a corruption be found in history.*

THAT these books should be universally corrupted was totally impossible from the very state of Christianity. —The Christian religion, even in the first century, was spread through every part of the known world. From the persecutions which then took place, the distinct communities existing at Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and in many other considerable cities, had little or no external connection with each other. As early as the first century arose Heretics, whose tenets were refuted by the Orthodox in their writings. Christians, even of no rank or consequence, were in possession of many

many copies of these books, which were revered and read with the greatest attention^a. During the two first centuries no secret was made of any one relation or doctrine of the holy scriptures. On the contrary, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Irenæus, appeal to the facility which every one enjoyed of reading their scriptures; and what has been termed the *Disciplina arcani*, which attempted an occasional suppression of different histories or doctrines, is a custom of latter times, and crept into Christianity with Pseudo-Platonism^b. And at a very early period many translations of them were made into the Syriac and Latin languages. Now it must have been almost a miracle, if—notwithstanding the great variety of copies, and translations, of the originals, spread abroad among

^a See Waleh On the use of the Holy Scripture among the ancient Christians. . Leipzig, 1779, in 8vo.

^b See above, p. 94.

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distinct communities existing in no external connection with each other; notwithstanding these writings were held in profound reverence and diligently studied; notwithstanding the opposite vigilance of heretics and orthodox—if, I say, the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists had been falsified in *all* the copies of the originals, and of the various translations, without the opposition of any one community, or of any single teacher.

In the beginning, it is true, the Orthodox and Heretics reciprocally accused each other of having falsified the holy scriptures. But even these very accusations evince the great attention with which the Christians watched over the purity of their sacred books, and the absolute impossibility of their *universal* corruption. An unknown author, noticed by Eusebius^p, accuses

^p Hist. Eccles. lib. v. cap. xxviii. p. 253—55.

the

the followers of Artemon with having introduced their heterodox system into the divine scriptures. In support of his assertion, he appeals to their own copies, and asserts that they were not only different from the copies of the orthodox, but also perfectly at variance with each other; and reproaches them with being unable to support these alterations by the authority of any ancient Manuscripts. It is by no means certain, that these heretics had really introduced those supposititious alterations into their copies of the New Testament; since the accuser seems to mean nothing more than the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which is called the Septuagint; produces no proofs of any such corruptions; and, in short, speaks in a tone too declamatory, to be received on this subject as an accurate relator¹. But should we

¹ See Lardner's *Credibility of the G. H.* vol. iii. p. 43—48. 1st edit.

grant,

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grant, that the accusations against Artemon and his followers were justly preferred, yet even these prove, that in the earliest ages of Christianity it was impossible for any one to attempt a corruption of the evangelical and apostolical writings, without meeting public opposition, and without being openly branded for a deceiver. That we may perceive how much such an alteration of the sacred scriptures was abhorred, I will quote the same author's sentiments on the subject. "What a daring crime this is (i. e. the corruption of the sacred books) possibly they themselves (the followers of Artemon) are not ignorant. For they must either not believe the divine Scriptures to have been inspired by the Holy Ghost; or else they must imagine themselves wiser than the Holy Ghost: On the first supposition they are infidels; on the second they are out of their senses."—The heretics retaliated,

taliated, and accused the orthodox of a similar offence. The Manicheans pretended, that the books of the New Testament were not written by the Evangelists and Apostles, but were falsely attributed to them in latter times, or were at least violently mutilated and corrupted by the Christians^r. But the Manicheans adopted this pretence, because the scriptures of the New Testament are evidently contradictory to their erroneous tenets concerning the Old Testament, the human nature of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and two eternal principles^s. They have themselves refuted their own assertion, by quoting as genuine those passages of the New Testament which

^r Faustus, one of the most learned among the Manicheans, had brought forward this accusation with the greatest shew of probability in the work, which was refuted by Augustine; Lib. xxxii. cap. ii. Lib. xxxiii. cap. iii. in Augustini Opera, vol. viii. p. 320, et p. 329, 330. edit. Benedictin.

^s See the passages from Faustus quoted above.

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treat of the discourses and miracles of Jesus, without any other proof than those by which we prove the authenticity of the whole[†]. Nor have they offered any *historical* argument as a proof of their assertion. 'There are absurdities in the writings of the New Testament. The Evangelists contradict themselves. The author of the Gospel attributed to St. Matthew speaks of Matthew in the third person[‡].' This was the whole proof which the learned Faustus could advance in support of his supposition. Arguments, which in part are visibly false; and which, even if they were true, could determine nothing in an *historical* discussion, where every thing depends on the attestation of credible *witnesses*. In order to have established his assertion, Faustus ought to have demonstrated, that all the old writers and

[†] Loc. cit.

[‡] Loco cit.

manuscripts, which we produce as evidences for the authenticity of the New Testament, prove nothing. He ought to have quoted opposite evidences and manuscripts, different from those which existed among the Christians. He ought to have shewn from history, when and where these corruptions were made. Had the doctrines of Christianity been really uncertain, this learned writer, who lived in the latter part of the fourth century, might without much trouble have produced these proofs. But on all these subjects he is *perfectly* silent; and every thing which he is able to produce, consists entirely in self-formed conclusions and charges, which are as groundless as the principal accusation.—His adversary, Augustine, challenges him to produce this proof, and appeals with perfect confidence to the unanimous testimony of all the teachers, and manuscripts of antiquity.

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quity. "What writings (says he") can you receive as genuine, if you reject those of the Evangelists and Apostles? We are convinced of the genuineness of the apostolical writings in the same manner, as we know that the works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, or Varro, were derived from those whose names they bear. Who can be so absurd as to reject our Scriptures, for whose genuineness, from the time of the Apostles, the Church has deposed such numerous and concordant testimonies?"—This very accusation, therefore, of itself proves, that the arguments for the authenticity of the evangelical and apostolical writings are incontrovertible.

¶ *Contra Faustum*, Lib. XXXIII. cap. vi. p. 330, 331. edit. Benedictin.

III.—*From the Agreement of all
the Manuscripts.*

THE manuscripts of the Scriptures of the New Testament, which are still extant, are far more numerous than those of any other book in the world. Above two hundred and fifty have been already collated by critics in their different editions. Of these, it is true, all do not contain the whole of the New Testament: the greater part have only the Gospels; others contain also the Acts and the Epistles of the Apostles; and a very small number the Revelation of St. John*. All these

* Besides these, a great number are preserved in the libraries of Germany, Italy, and other countries, which have not yet been consulted. The most perfect and accurate information concerning the MSS. which have been used in editions of the Greek Text, is to be found in the Prologomena to Mill's and Küfter's edition of the N. T. in the Prologomena to Wettstein's N. T. and in Michaelis' Intr. to the N. T. vol. iii. p. 185—361. of the learned and accurate Mr. Marsh's Translation.

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manuscripts, which were written in very different parts of the world, and of which some are above twelve hundred years old, give us the books of the New Testament in all *essential matters* perfectly accordant with each other, as any one may easily convince himself by examining the editions published by Mill, Küster, Bengel, Wettstein, or Griesbach.—The thirty thousand *Various Readings*, which are said to be found even in the manuscripts collated by Mill, consist almost entirely in nothing but palpable errors in transcription, or trifling grammatical and verbal differences which by no means make any alteration in the sense of the subject^r. Some indeed change the

γ As—Mark iv. 32, instead of, *ὅταν σπασῇ, when it is sown*; *ὅταν φύῃ, when it is grown up*:—Chap. v. 9, *ἀπεκρίθη λέγων, he answered, saying*; *λέγει αὐτῷ, he says unto him*:—or instead of *εἰσελθοῦντες, ελθοῦντες*; instead of *ἰλληνισαῖς, ἰλληναῖς*; instead of *πρεσβυτέρους, πρεσβυτέρους*; instead of *φarisαίου, φarisαίων*; instead of *ἑακτισα, ἑακτισθῇ*.

sense,

fenſe, yet only in paſſages which relate unimportant hiſtorical and geographical circumſtances, or other collateral matters^z. And the few which make any alteration in things of conſequence, do not on that account place us in abſolute uncertainty. For either we can diſcover the true reading by collating the other manuſcripts, verſions, and quotations found in the works of the ancients^a; or, ſhould this not be the caſe, yet we can even then explain with certainty the doctrine from other paſſages of the ſacred books^b.—Theſe numerous variations,

^z For inſtance; γαδαρηων, for γερρισηων: βηθαſαρα, for βηθανια: or Luke xxiv. 43, the addition, εφαγε, και τα επιλοιπα εδωκεν αυτοις; Acts of the Apoſt. viii. 39, πνευμα αγιον επεſει επι τον ευαγγελιον.

^a As 1 Tim. iii. 16; where we find the different readings, Θεος ες, and ε.

^b For inſtance, Acts of the Apoſt. xx. 28, ſome MSS. inſtead of Θεε have Κυριε. Let us ſuppoſe that we could not here make out which is the true reading, yet the matter may be determined from many other paſſages.

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therefore, are the most convincing proof, that the Holy Scriptures have not been altered in any point of doctrine or morality, or other matter of importance; because they are found perfectly concordant in all manuscripts of the originals and of the versions, which have been written and composed in Europe, Asia, and Africa. So far therefore from being hostile to the *uncorrupted preservation* of the books of our New Testament, (as some enemies of Christianity have asserted from ignorance or wicked motives, and as many Christians have likewise apprehended from groundless fear) these variations afford us, on the contrary, an additional and most convincing proof, that they exist at present, in all essential matters, as they left the hands of their authors.

IV.—*From the agreement of the old versions, and quotations found in the ecclesiastical fathers.*

AFTER all, should any one entertain a doubt concerning the uncorrupted preservation of our books of the New Testament, it must perfectly vanish, if we consider the wonderful agreement of all the old versions, and of all the quotations and extracts found in the ecclesiastical fathers.—There is still extant a Syriac translation of all the books of the New Testament (the second Epistle of St. Peter, the second and third Epistles of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the Revelation of St. John, alone excepted), which, in all probability, was made in the first century. In the same period existed in the Western church Latin versions, of which considerable fragments still remain. The Latin trans-

lation of Jerom (which is generally called the Vulgate), the Coptic, different Arabic, the Ethiopic, Armenian, Perfic, and Gothic, versions are indeed in part much more modern, and therefore not considered by critics on the New Testament as of equal consequence*. Yet they prove thus much, that in all communities of Christians, both in the East and West, the *same writings* have ever been regarded as genuine works of the Evangelists and Apostles, which we in the present day find still unaltered in our New Testament.—If we add to these circumstances, that the ecclesiastical fathers of the first centuries have quoted almost *every* verse of the New Testament, and, in regard to essential points, exactly agreeably to our present text; also, that many of them (for instance, Origen, Chrysostom, Jerom, Augustin,

* Michaelis has given very ample information concerning these versions in his Introduction to the N. T.

Cyril

Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, and Œcumenius,) have left us commentaries either on all, or on individual books of the New Testament, of which the scriptural text exactly coincides with our printed copies,—we must without hesitation confess, that the books which are now extant in our editions of the New Testament are the uncorrupted writings of the Evangelists and Apostles.

The enemies of Christianity notwithstanding, continually pretend that they have been corrupted!—No one indeed, who possesses the least knowledge of the principles of criticism, will readily assert, that the Various Readings are corruptions.—But on this subject we meet with Collins, who appeals to an alteration of the Gospels, which, according to the information of ecclesiastical history, is said to have taken place in the sixth century under the Emperour Anastasius. Victor,

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Bishop of Tunis in Africa, relates in his Chronicon^d, that the Emperour Anastasius, considering that the Gospels were written by illiterate men, ordered them to be improved at Constantinople. This Victor is the only evidence that can be brought forward for this event; for Isidore of Seville relates it merely on his authority. He lived in Africa; consequently far distant from the scene where the alteration is said to have taken place. All the other writers make not the least mention of this circumstance: which, without doubt, would have excited bitter and unanimous complaints against the Emperour, already an object of general hatred. Moreover, Victor offers not the shadow of a proof in support of his narration: he names no immediate witnesses on whose authority he relates the story. Now, from a relation so

^d Ad. A. 506. See Scaligeri Thesaurus temporum.

very

very incredible, Collins, in opposition to the unanimous assertions of so many and such credible witnesses, attempts to prove the corruption of the New Testament*. But, even if we should grant, that this information delivered by an African Bishop of an event which is said to have happened at Constantinople, is deserving of credit; yet the alteration would not have taken place in all the manuscripts which existed in the Eastern church; for, according to his own information, it is said to have been made only in the manuscripts at Constantinople. And if it had been actually put in execution in all

* In his 'Discourse of free-thinking,' p. 69—73. In order to prove that the Scriptures of the New Testament are perfectly uncertain, he introduces the following arguments:—1. Because the Canon of the New Testament was not made until sixty years after the death of Christ.—(But it could not have been formed earlier, for before that time all the Holy Scriptures had not been composed).—2. From the thirty thousand different readings in Mill.—And 3. From the passage of Victor, alluded to above.

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the Oriental manuscripts, yet the manuscripts of the Western church, over which Anastasius had no authority, would have remained unaltered. Further, if we should grant even this, yet it was impossible to alter *all the manuscripts of all the versions*. Had therefore such an alteration been actually undertaken, it could not have been *universal*; but there would still have remained either the manuscripts of the West, or at least the versions, from which we might have been enabled to restore the original text. Since therefore not only all the Oriental and all the Western manuscripts of the Greek Gospels perfectly coincide with each other; but also all the old translations, and all the citations and commentaries of the primitive ecclesiastical writers are in perfect harmony with them,—it is most evident, either that the relation of Victor is a mere fable, or that such an alteration, should it even have
been

been resolved on, was never actually put into execution^f.

Had the enemies of Christianity studied the proofs of our holy religion with more diligence and impartial care, they would not at least have considered such palpable absurdities as objections to its truth. The objection of Collins has perhaps a semblance of reason. But when Chubb^g says—‘It is abundantly evident that the Bible has been corrupted in the dark ages of popery by the clergy, in whose hands it at

^f See ‘Remarks upon a late discourse of free-thinking, by Phileleutherus Lipsienfis,’ Cambridge, the sixth edition, 1725, in 8vo. Dr. Richard Bentley, the author of this work, defends the authenticity of our New Testament, particularly against the objections which are drawn from the Various Readings, and from the above-mentioned information of Victor, p. 61—84.—In all probability this story of Victor took its origin from his having misunderstood the account concerning Macedonius, Patriarch of Constantinople. See loc. cit. p. 82.

^g In his *Posthumous Works*, vol. i. p. 65, 66, 118, 121, 122, &c.

that

that time exclusively existed, —it is in fact to assert, that the Pope and his clergy had brought together all the manuscripts of the New Testament, and the almost innumerable manuscripts of the different versions, and all the works of the ecclesiastical fathers; and when, with wonderful sagacity, they had projected and carried into execution such an almost miraculous undertaking, that with inconceivable stupidity they altered not a single one of those passages which evidently contradict their erroneous tenets, for instance, concerning papal supremacy, the worship of saints, the mass, celibacy, monastic vows, purgatory, and indulgences.



PART II.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

BOOK I.

*The Authors of the New Testament
possess in a very high Degree all the
requisite Qualities of credible Evi-
dences.*

IF we now unite the propositions al-
ready proved ; if we consider the great
number of credible witnesses, who una-
nimously relate, that soon after the
death of Jesus four Gospels, and the
same number of Epistles as still exist
in the collection of the New Testa-
ment, were written by the Apostles and
Disciples of Jesus ; that these books,
as we possess them at present, are the
very

very same in all the translations and manuscripts of the original; and perfectly coincide with the quotations and commentaries of the primitive writers;—we must either reject the writings of Xenophon, Thucydides, Livy and Tacitus, for whose authenticity neither so many nor strong arguments can be found, and, in a word, all the ancient writings in the world, as not genuine,—or we must acknowledge, that the scriptures of the New Testament are *authentic*, and in every matter of importance, *perfectly uncorrupted*.

But from this alone we cannot determine their *Credibility*. An author may write of events, which happened in his time and in the place of his residence, but should he be either *credulous* or a *fanatic*, or should we have reason to suspect his *honesty*, his evidence is of no value. In order, therefore, to establish the Credibility of an author, we must examine more closely into
into

into his particular character, and inquire whether he possessed *abilities* sufficient to scrutinize the truth, and *honesty* enough faithfully to relate it as it happened.

Now the historical writers of the New Testament are distinguished also from all others whose credibility has never been called in question by any reasonable man, in this respect—that if historical subjects were capable of mathematical demonstration, we must acknowledge that their credibility has been not only morally proved, but even demonstrated mathematically.

SECT. I.

They were immediate Witnesses.

THE writers of the New Testament *lived at the time, and in the place*, of the actual occurrence of the events, which are the subject of their history. St. Matthew, St. John, St. Peter, St. James,

James, and St. Jude, were Jews by birth, and lived in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, at Jerusalem, the scene of the history which they relate. They were all, moreover, *immediate* disciples of Jesus, and the facts contained in their histories had been subject to the scrutiny of their own senses.—It is true that St. Paul was a native of Tarsus, and not among those who had been the friends of Jesus, and the eye-witnesses of his actions. Yet he had lived a long time at Jerusalem, had studied Theology under Gamaliel, a Jewish scholar at that time in the greatest repute, and diligently employed himself in acquiring a thorough knowledge of the Jewish religion.—We have but few biographical memoirs extant of St. Mark and St. Luke: Yet thus much we do know, that the former composed his history under the immediate inspection of St. Peter^h, and the

^h See the testimonies of Clement of Alexandria, Papias, and Tertullian, on this subject.

latter his narration under the immediate inspection of St. Paul¹. Their histories must therefore be considered to possess the same authority as if they had been written by the eye-witnesses themselves, whom we have named above^k.

SECT. II.

They were also competent Witnesses.

THE writers of the New Testament had *the most important reasons*, and sufficient abilities, to examine into the truth or falshood of their histories.

¹ See the testimonies of Tertullian and Origen.

^k The Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel by St. Luke form but one book. For in the Acts of the Apostles i. 1. the writer names his Gospel *πρωτον λογος*, librum primum, *the first part*; he continues immediately from thence, where he had left off in the Gospel; and has dedicated both to *one* man, namely, Theophilus.—Consequently, whatever is said by the ancients concerning the History of St. Luke, is to be understood not only of the Gospel, but also of the Acts of the Apostles.

They

They relate their memoirs, not for the purpose of delighting future ages, or of conveying information in the usual method of historical writings; but they build on them a *System of Religion*, from which alone they expected their temporal and eternal welfare. ‘If Christ be not risen,’ says St. Paul,¹ ‘then is our doctrine and your faith false; then are we yet in our sins; then they who have died in the belief of the truth of our religion are perished for ever; then are we persecuted Christians of all men the most miserable.’ A history which they conceived to be so essential, the very foundation of all their hopes and of all their faith, had been undoubtedly scrutinized and proved by them with the most anxious care.

¹ 1 Corinth. xv. 13—19.

SECT. III.

They were by no means credulous.

“BUT who—it is objected—is un-
acquainted with the power of *Credulity* and *Fanaticism*? The innumerable multitude of fanatics of whom history gives us information, may have employed care and labour enough on the examination of their wonderful adventures; yet credulity and fanaticism had blinded their reason to that degree, that some of them have even fancied that they had a daily intercourse with the Deity, and were furnished with miraculous powers. No one, for instance, can deny that Baron Swedenborg was a man of learning, penetration, and honesty; nevertheless this man, in other respects of sound judgment and worthy of credit, believed and
T “ asserted,

“ asserted, for the space of more than
“ forty years, that he had frequent
“ visits from angels, was caught up
“ into Heaven, and there received a
“ variety of new doctrines.”—Cer-
tainly this observation ought to render
us extremely cautious in examining
such histories, particularly those con-
nected with a religious system. But
this caution and severity of examina-
tion, when applied to the history of the
New Testament, shew us so much the
more evidently, that the writers of it
possessed the most perfect capability of
avoiding any errors, and of accurately
examining the true ground of their nar-
ratives. The events which they relate
are of such a nature, that the proof of
their truth requires nothing more than
sound organs of sense. The examples
of the astonishing deceptions of fa-
natical people relate for the most part
to *opinions*; seldom or never to his-
torical subjects, or to *matters of fact*.
And

And who does not perceive that these are widely different from each other? In a Court of justice we can prove the truth of a fact by means of witnesses; but it has never been heard, that the truth of an opinion (for instance, the immateriality or immortality of the soul) was established by the deposition of evidences. A man may likewise be deceived from certain affections incomparably easier in the case of opinions, than in the case of facts. In the case of facts also there exists a great difference. The Quaker, Jacob Maylor, in the time of Cromwell's protectorate, could easily imagine that he was transformed into the person of Christ, and made the Saviour of the world: or another fanatic may with equal ease persuade himself, that he enjoys visions of the Deity, and that he feels a particular inspiration of the Spirit. For in order to ascertain the truth of facts which concern ourselves, and our

internal sensations, we must presuppose the person endowed with a sound and well-cultivated judgment, and no common knowledge of the distinction between sensations and imaginations. But that a man, Jesus, taught at Jerusalem in the reign of Tiberius; that he revealed certain new and peculiar doctrines to his disciples; that, in public places, and in the presence of many persons, he healed a variety of people who were lame, blind and dumb, and also, under circumstances of the like publicity, gave life to the dead; that he died on the cross, was buried in the customary manner of the Jews, and on the third day came again alive to his friends; had intimate intercourse with them as before his death; and in the sight of many of these friends ascended gradually into the air, and at last vanished from their eyes;—*such* facts require, in order to prove their truth, and set them beyond the possibility

bility of doubt, nothing more than that the witness's organs of sight and hearing be sound, and that he uses them like one awake.

To this must be added, that the Apostles were by no means *credulous*. They might perhaps have possessed this passion, so prevalent among the Jews, in other respects, and have amused themselves with fables. But, *in this matter*, they were certainly so far removed from it, that we have reason to think them rather *incredulous* and *obstinate*. Their Master had informed them beforehand, that after his passion and death he would arise from the dead: but scarcely had the Roman guard taken him into custody, before they all fled, resigned their flattering hopes, and absolutely denied that they had ever known him. Some women relate that they had found the grave empty, and had spoken with Jesus alive. Now, had the Apostles been

in the least degree credulous, they would not assuredly have had the least hesitation in believing it: but they ridiculed it as an idle tale^m. St. Peter nevertheless, instigated by curiosity, runs to the place, and finds the report perfectly true; the grave is open and empty; he—wonders, and departsⁿ. After some time Jesus comes into their assembly, where ten of the Apostles are present: and now they can doubt no longer. But St. Thomas, who was absent, thinks them all deceived, and will not believe before he has accurately inspected the body of this person, and discovered on it the marks of his crucifixion, and the wound in his side^o. And how violently was St. Paul prepossessed against the truth of this history? How active in discovering those who confessed it, and in procuring their death^p? Can we believe that

^m Luke xxiv. 1—11. • John xx. 24, 25.

ⁿ Luke xxiv. 12. • Acts viii. ix.

such people were *credulous*, and suppose that they received their history as true on the first vague report, without further examination?—Had Cromwell, in the presence of the Lords and Commons, asserted that he had seen the unfortunate King Charles a few weeks after his execution, first in Westminster Abbey, and afterwards many times in St. James's palace, and conversed with him frequently for several hours together; had the Usurper, in consequence of this, resigned the Protectorate, and made preparations for bringing back the exiled Queen and family; we should have conceived, perhaps, that he had experienced an extraordinarily violent fit of *Fanaticism*; but it would have occurred to no one to accuse him on this account of *Credulity*; and to assert, that he had blindly received this relation as true only on the information of an old soldier,

dier, or a woman that was perfectly unknown to him.

SECT. IV.

Neither were they Fanatics.

SOME may perhaps be inclined to adduce the above example against the truth of the Gospel-history. The *strangeness* and *wonderfulness* of such a relation, it may be said, would have inclined every reasonable man to have conceived that the Protector was rather a fanatic than that his narration was true. This I shall hereafter examine. And here, where we are not treating of the *miracles*, but merely of the common and customary events, of the apostolical history, we must first examine this question,—whether the writers of the New Testament can reasonably be considered as fanatics; or whether we cannot discover evident traces,

traces, that they were not in the least infected with this dangerous poison of the human understanding? An inquiry which will conduct us into some of the most interesting and instructive parts of the history of the human understanding; and is absolutely essential for the conviction of Christians, on account of the frequent accusation of fanaticism which is made by the enemies of the New Testament. To examine this subject therefore more accurately will amply repay our trouble.

I will, in the first place, endeavour to collect from history the different features in the character of this astonishing phenomenon, a fanatic;—and then compare the picture with our scriptural writers¹.—*A fanatic thinks himself always*

¹ Fanatic, fanaticus, ἐκράτις, φανατικός, is one who acts only according to his sensations, and not according to the reflections of his reason. And this is the case, even when his sensations are true, agreeable to their objects: but still more so, when they are merely

ways the chief favourite of heaven. And truly a person in whom the Divinity immediately dwells, with whom He deigns daily to hold immediate converse, and makes a living oracle; such a person most assuredly has reason to believe, that he is extraordinarily favoured by God. This fanatical pride is often carried to such an extent in men, that they convince themselves God should do every thing which they desire; and if He does it not, think themselves offended, break out into acrimonious complaints against Him, or uncharitable accusations of ungodliness in other men, which they fancy

merely imaginary. A man may act fanatically in a variety of ways: for instance, if he be guided in his conduct by mere antipathies, or sympathies, perform any thing only because he feels an internal excitement to it; imagine that he has seen angels, hears discourses from heaven, &c.—But we must be very careful not to confound the fanatic with the sentimentalist, the man of feeling (*ισχυριστής*): the latter is a praiseworthy quality, the former a blameable.

to

to be the cause of the disaffection of heaven.—*Disorder and contradiction in their system*, (if a collection of unconnected, problematical, and contradictory opinions can be called a system) *and obscurity and absurdity in their explication of it*, form another feature in the fanatical character. Men, in whom the power of the senses is extended to a kind of madness, are not in a condition to employ the reasoning faculties of the understanding, which require internal tranquillity. And the constant tumult of their minds renders them incapable of speaking connectedly and rationally. Should they discourse of their *inspiration*, that obscurity becomes perfect nonsense. A Fanatic may be a person of great talents and rare prudence in the management of his temporal concerns. But this strength of mind is of no other use to him only to sink him deeper in the vortex of his fancies and follies.

follies. And this absurdity in his discourses, compared with the prudence in the management of his temporal concerns, forms one of the strangest contrasts that we can imagine.—Fanatics are generally *enemies, or at least contemnners, of all written revelation*: because it renders their own continual inspiration perfectly unnecessary. They distinguish it by the low and irreverent name of an *obscure writing*, which must be cleared up by internal light, and of a *dead letter*, which must be animated by the living spirit which exists in the soul.—This is the cause of the *complete indifference to all religion*, which is commonly united with Fanaticism. ‘Their mind,’ says a profoundly thinking historian; ‘which floats on the wide sea of inspiration, can be confined within no bounds; and therefore they permit to others also the same liberty.’ But however tolerant they may often be in religious matters,

matters, in their civil concerns they are equally cruel and barbarous. The supposition that they are immediately influenced by God in all their actions and undertakings, and that they think and act by his command, places them far above humanity, and blinds them to such a degree, that they exercise the most cruel tyranny, and shed in streams the blood of God's creatures and children, not only without any sensations of pity, but, on the contrary, with joy and triumph.—That fanatics exhibit a *wonderful firmness under sufferings and torments* is known to every one, and has been frequently used by the enemies of Christianity, to detract from the firm heroic courage of the Christian martyrs. But the characteristic of fanatical firmness under torments, namely that *imprudent, inflexible obstinacy and that insensible obduracy* which in these cases they constantly exhibit, has not been often remarked.

If

If a person does not give himself the least trouble to represent to his tyrants, with modesty and gentleness, the principles for the sake of which he is persecuted ; but, on the contrary, answers those in authority over him either not at all, or with impertinence ; if he reject all the methods, which prudence would point out for avoiding his torments either wholly or in part, without violence to his principles, and if he rather solicit sufferings : who does not perceive that such a firmness under torments cannot proceed from a calm and rational reflection and an heroic disregard of the world ; but is the effect of a morose, unsocial obstinacy and an inhuman obduracy ; rather a paroxysm of frenzy than a praiseworthy firmness of mind ?—This paroxysm often increases to such a degree, that it produces even *convulsive agitations of the body*, and *absolute madness* ; as we learn particularly from the early history

tory of the Quakers.—Such gloomy and morose persons, who consider the world with nausea and hatred, and have retired as it were back into themselves, in order to listen constantly to the suggestions of heaven; who imagine that they are infinitely exalted above common humanity, and are the particular objects of the divine favour and care: such persons cannot certainly form a social, beneficent system of morality. Condemnation of all innocent indulgences; a solitary, selfish, gloomy, melancholy life; numerous fasts; rigid vows of celibacy; all possible avoidance of domestic and civil society; hostile hatred of the body and of the world; corporeal sufferings and mortifications; in short, a *morose, unsocial, and barbarous severity* is the characteristic of a Fanatic's system of morality.

It would conduct me too far from my purpose, were I to enter on a
more

more ample developement of this character. Whoever is acquainted with the history of the Montanists, of Mahomet, of the earliest Anabaptists, of Cromwell and his fanatical followers, of the Quakers, and Jansenists, will be able to confirm the truth of each individual feature sketched above by many examples from history.

From this picture of fanaticism cannot be selected a single, even the most trifling, feature which can be applied to the writers of the New Testament; on the contrary, they possessed traits diametrically opposite to every one of them.—These men relate many great errors and faults which they had themselves fallen into: their strange ideas of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah; their inconstancy towards Jesus, whom they all deserted at his death; the rash and mad zeal with which St. Paul persecuted the Christians; the reprehensible hypocrisy of St. Peter.

They

They make mean and humble descriptions of themselves; they attribute all their gifts and extraordinary endowments solely to the unmerited grace of God; they represent themselves as slaves, servants of the Christians, and as unworthy objects of the divine grace and beneficence*. They speak, also, uniformly of themselves with equal reverence, modesty, and humility*.—In their system exists the most perfect harmony. St. Paul has never contradicted himself in his epistles, which he wrote at very different times, and addressed to very different communities and persons. The historians of Jesus have indeed some trifling discrepancies in the collateral circumstances of their narratives (and this is an evident proof that they did not copy one from another); but in essential matters they entirely and perfectly

* 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.

* 1 Corinth. xv. 10. 2 Corinth.

agreed. And although scarcely one among them had read the writings of the others¹, yet their histories and doctrines are perfectly concordant. The system itself, even those parts of it which treat of their inspiration², is exhibited with such method, connection, perspicuity, and good natural understanding, that the most simple can understand it in its essential parts, and comprehend the sense of the writers³.—

In

¹ St. John, St. Peter, and St. Jude, are the only scriptural authors, of whom it is probable that they had read the writings of the others, before they composed their own works.

² 1 Corinth. ii.

³ Benson, in the Appendix to his Paraphrase of the Epistle to Philemon, in the First Dissertation, 'In which it is shewn that St. Paul could neither be an impostor nor an enthusiast,' has made some very excellent observations on the character of the Apostle, which is so clearly expressed in the whole of the Epistle: how far he was removed from all ambition, pride, and selfishness; how compassionate towards human misery and weakness; how well acquainted with the modes of thinking and language of the polished world; how exempt

In their writings they shew the greatest veneration for the written revelation of the Old Testament. They exhort their disciples to study it diligently²; they pronounce it a truly divine revelation, and a binding rule of belief and conduct⁷; and they point out its friendly harmony with the Christian system².—They invariably insist on this truth, that no other religion than that which they preached, can procure men

exempt from a solitary enthusiastic temper of mind. Read this Epistle in the Paraphrase of Sir Richard Steele, in his *Christian Hero*. I could wish that some friend of the Christian religion would, with the same view, devote his attention to the consideration of the speeches of St. Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, and unfold the connection, solidity, confidence, sublimity, and integrity which are so very prominent in them. Such a work would be a convincing apology for the scriptural authors, in respect of their pretended fanaticism.

² 2 Tim. iii. 14—17.

⁷ 2 Peter i. 20, 21.

² Acts ii. 14—36. xiii. 15—41. Rom. iv. 10. 19—21, &c.

to great and lasting happiness^a. But they make always a distinction between guilty and innocent ignorance and error^b: And thus reject all religious indifference on the one hand, and on the other all intolerant and anathematizing principles. —In their sentiments and actions we remark the most meek, charitable and benevolent temper. They earnestly forbid men to accuse others of heterodoxy, or to pronounce them damned^c; they anxiously exhort to obedience of human ordinances, and the commands of the heathen magistracy^d; they direct that prayers should be offered up even for Nero^e; and their whole system of morals is directly pointed to instil into their disciples an universal, constant, disinterested, and generous

^a Acts iv. 12. Rom. iii. 20—26.

^b Rom. i. ii. &c.

^c Rom. xiv. 3—23.

^d Rom. xiii. 1—7. 1 Peter ii. 13—17.

^e 1 Tim. ii. 1—6.

philanthropy^f. ' I conjure you by all the good things, which Jesus has procured us; by the enlivening comforts which accompany charity; by the intimate connection in which you stand with one another; that you fulfil my only joy, and be unanimous, charitable, of one mind; do nothing with strife, and vain glory, but in humility let each esteem others higher than himself; and be anxious not only for your own advantage, but also for the advantage of others. For you must have sentiments such as were the sentiments of Jesus Christ; who joyfully and voluntarily yielded up all his preeminencies and divine majesty for the advantage of men^g. Is this the language of a Fanatic? Read only the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, or the first Epistle of St. John, and then say, whether such so-

^f Rom. xiii. 8—16. Galat. v. 13, 14.

^g Phil. ii. 1—11.

cial and benevolent principles and sentiments could exist in the mind of a Fanatic? Did ever a Fanatic place philanthropy, that is a philanthropy which consists in an universally extended, and universally active kindness^a, above all his opinions, favourite doctrines, and especial gifts? or speak of it with such strong feelings and in such emphatic language?—And this system of morals they not only enforced by words, but also by their example. They have never assumed a dominion over their disciples; never required what they directed, in a commanding tone. Was it necessary for the welfare of Christianity to use severity? even this was marked with the characters of pity towards the transgressors, and of a paramount desire to increase the general good. And their whole life was a series of afflictions, tribulations, suf-

^a 1 Corinth. xlii. 4—7.

ferings and critical dangers, which they bore from a love to their fellow creatures,—Again, how infinitely different was their behaviour under sufferings, from the behaviour of a Fanatic! They preached indeed their doctrines with ardent courage and undaunted firmness: but they no where courted sufferings. Are they persecuted in one city? they flee to another. Are they apprehended, and dragged before the seat of justice? they discover a profound reverence for the magistracy; return the desired answers to every question; declare the doctrines which they preached with becoming and modest boldness; refute the false accusations of their adversaries; and use every means, which prudence or foresight suggest, to conciliate their judges, and make them inclined towards them. And was all this ineffectual? could they not otherwise escape condemnation than by renouncing their religion?

then, composed and courageous; with minds full of philanthropy and reconciliation; and pouring forth fervent prayers for the welfare of their enemies and executioners, they submitted to death. It is only such a serenity of mind, when the bitterness of affliction is felt; devoid of all obstinacy and contumacious disrespect for others; and suffering solely for the love of truth, that can be named heroic courage and firmness of mind.—In their whole system of morals nothing is found of morose, gloomy severity. They pronounce mortifications and voluntary sufferings to be of no importance in the sight of God¹, but rather folly and barbarous absurdity². They know nothing of the monkish virtues of those who call themselves more modern Christians; of voluntary poverty, abstinence from matrimonial

¹ 1 Corinth. xiii. 3.

² Ephes. v. 29. Coloss. ii.

connections, avoidance of social societies, and rejection of temporal dignities and honours. They no where condemn the solicitation or possession of honours and wealth, or the enjoyment of the pleasures which this world affords: they only exhort Christians to use these goods of the earth with grateful hearts towards God; devoid of every unsocial act of impurity, cruelty, or excess; and for the welfare of mankind in general¹. Can any maxims be conceived more suitable, more advantageous to the human race, than those which St. Paul delivers²? 'Charge the rich of this world, that they be not proud; and that they place not their trust in perishable riches, but in the Eternal God, who plentifully provides for our enjoyment

¹ Rom xiii. 1—6. xiv. 1 Corinth. vii. 17—24. and in the whole of the 8th chap. x. 27—33. 1 Tim. iv. 1—5.

² 1 Tim. vi. 17—19.

of the goods of the earth. That they do good; be rich in good works; generous, and impart willingly; and thereby assure themselves of eternal life.—And it is particularly worthy of remark, that they did not preach this most enlivening and comfortable system of morals, like Seneca or Plato, possessed of all the enjoyments of life, but under every species of tribulation and affliction*.

The writers of the New Testament are, therefore, far removed from the pride of thinking themselves the especial favourites of God; they produce with method and perspicuity a connected, harmonious system of religion; they are great advocates for written revelation; they insist on the necessity of their religion, and condemn indeed all spirit of persecution, but at the same time all religious indifference;

* 1 Tim. iv. 1—4. vi. 17—19. Compare with 2 Corinth. iv. vi. xi.

the central point of their system of morals, and of their conduct, is philanthropy, embracing and promoting the happiness of all; they exhibit under afflictions and torments a truly heroic courage; they censure all melancholy and gloom, recommend the use and enjoyment of earthly pleasures, and direct them to the noblest aim, the good of human society.— They are consequently *diametrically opposite* to Fanatics*.

SECT. V.

They were, on the contrary, Men of Integrity.

THE writers of the New Testament have given strong proofs of their integrity. I have already remarked †,

* See Lyttleton's Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul, in which this is proved particularly in regard to that Apostle.

† See above, 11, and following pages.

that

that the style of their writings, and the choice of the events which they relate, contain strong arguments for their honesty. But it may be necessary in this place to extend this examination somewhat further.—In the historical books written by Jewish and heathen contemporaries, *who were not Christians*, many events of the Gospel-history are confirmed. I will not delay the reader by proving, that every thing which the writers of the New Testament casually relate of the Roman emperours, Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius; of the kings and considerable persons among the Jews; of the magistracies and customs of the Romans, Greeks, and Jews; of the civil rights and constitutions of the Jewish states; of the religious systems and opinions which then existed among them—exactly coincides with the information of foreign historians on these subjects. Lardner has discussed this
subject

subject in the first part of his Credibility of the Gospel-history with extraordinary labour, accuracy, and solidity¹. It is sufficient for my present purpose to select from the great mass of events which he has produced, some of the principal, which either belong to the history of Christianity itself, or are intimately connected with it.

Of the Taxing, (more properly, Enrolment, *απογραφή*) which, according to St. Luke², compelled the Parents of Jesus to leave Nazareth their place of residence, and go to Bethlehem, we find indeed no mention in foreign writers³. But the speech of Gamaliel, which

¹ In the second volume (first edition) of the Credibility of the Gospel-history: or the facts *occasionally* mentioned in the N. T., confirmed by passages of Ancient Authors, who were contemporary with our Saviour or his Apostles, or lived near their time.

² ii. 1—5.

³ The information itself of the Evangelist is of very doubtful interpretation. It is uncertain whether
he

which is given us in the Acts of the Apostles¹, makes mention of an enrolment² which happened at the time when Judas the Galilean excited a sedition among the Jews. And in Josephus³ we find, that after the banish-

he speaks of a taxation of the whole Roman empire, or only of the whole Jewish territory; (for *γῆ* may signify either world or country.) And the words *ἀὐτὸν ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐστὶν ἐνταῦθα ὑπομένοντες τὰς εὐχὰς Κερνίου*, are translated by the commentators in three different ways: 1. This taxation was the first when Cyrenius was governour of Syria: 2. This taxation was made before Cyrenius was governour of Syria: 3. This taxation was the first of those which were made by Cyrenius (afterwards) governour of Syria. Lardner has treated most amply of this matter, *Credibility of the G. H. Part I. vol. ii. p. 1—188. 1st edit.* But what he asserts, p. 70, is very improbable; that the administration of the oath to the Jews, which, according to the information of Josephus (*Antiquit. XVII. cap. ii. § 6*) happened at the time of Herod, is the same event as the enrolment of St. Luke: that this assertion is unfounded is evidently seen by comparing together the two accounts.

¹ v. 34—39.

² v. 37.

³ *Antiquit. XVIII. chap. i. § 1. p. 869, 870.*

ment

ment of Archelaus, Judea was made a Roman province, and an enrolment was appointed by Cyrenius, then President of Syria; on which occasion a certain Galilean, of the name of Judas, excited the people not to submit to this order². Let us compare the speech of Gamaliel, in the Acts of the Apostles, "After this man (*viz.* Theudas, *v.* 36.) rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the enrolment, and drew away much people after him." How exact and true is this narration!—St. Matthew relates³ an action of King Herod, which, in respect to cruelty, has scarcely a parallel in history. He commanded all the male children in Bethlehem and the neighbouring country, who were a year old and under, to be put to death; because he had been informed, that in that place was born one who was King of the

² De bello Judaico, Lib. VII. c. viii. §. 1. p. 422.

³ ii. 2—16.

Jews. This appears to us, who are accustomed to the finer feelings of Christianity, almost incredible. But let us compare the character of this prince, as drawn by Josephus, with the above-mentioned fact, and we shall find that his action is perfectly agreeable to his ruling sentiments and mode of thinking, and no more than we should expect from a man of a similar character. Herod had no common understanding and talents; but was biassed by an unlimited and insatiable ambition. This ambition urged him on to do every thing, without distinction, whether it were vicious or had the semblance of virtue, which tended to gratify his ruling passion. Hence arose in his character that heterogeneous mixture of affable behaviour, splendid expence, tenderness towards his friends, and specious undertakings on the one side,—suspicion, rapaciousness, implacability, irreligion, in-

inhumanity, and tiger-like cruelty on the other. He was resolute and daring in his undertakings; mild, conversible and agreeable in his external behaviour; generous in matters which tended to the advantage, delight or splendour of the public; and in outward appearance willing to do good to all. Yet this same man opened for himself a path to the throne by the murder of Antigonus and Hyrcanus, the only remaining princes of the Maccabean family; the latter, who was his near relation and had saved his life, he assassinated with his own hand, and of the former he procured the death by means of bribery. He complied with the idolatrous worship of the Romans; plundered his subjects; and was suspicious and jealous of his best friends. Aristobulus, the brother of his wife Mariamne, was murdered by his directions, only because the people at Jerusalem shewed some affection for

his person. Mariamne herself suffered a public execution, which was soon followed by that of her mother Alexandra. He put to death, in cold blood, a great number of the most considerable persons among the Jews; and even his own promising sons Alexander and Aristobulus were strangled by his orders, because he suspected that they might strive to obtain the sovereign power². But the most horrible of all
was

² Josephus, *Antiquit. Judaic. Lib. XIV. cap. xvi. §. 4. p. 737. edit. Haverkamp. XV. cap. iii. §. 3. p. 745. XV. cap. vi. §. 2. p. 756. cap. vii. §. 4—6. p. 761—763; ibid. §. 8. p. 763, 764. XVI. cap. xi. §. 6. p. 822.* The last most painful illness with which Herod was afflicted, is pronounced by Josephus to have been a punishment of the just God for the crimes of the king, *XVII. cap. vi. §. 5. p. 845*, and he concludes the account of his life with this painting; *αὐτῆς ὅμως μὲν εἰς πάντας ὁμοίως καὶ βροτῆς μὲν ἦσαν, κρείσσων δὲ τῷ δικαίῳ*, *Lib. XVII. cap. viii. §. 1. p. 848.* The Jewish Ambassadors, who, after his death, requested the Emperor Augustus, rather to make their country a Roman province, than to place it under the dominion of the Herodian family, affirmed,
f that

was the last action with which he departed out of the world, and from which he wished to establish another monument to his memory, and immortalize his name. In his last illness he commanded all the principal people of the nation to assemble themselves at Jerusalem, where he then lay. At their arrival they were shut up in the Hippodrome, and the dying king gave his sister Salome and her husband Alexas the following order, "As soon as the breath is out of my body, let them all be put to death, that all Judea may be compelled to lament at my decease." "With tears in his eyes, (says Josephus^a,) he conjured them by their love

'that he had been a most cruel tyrant, and that the nation had suffered more through him alone, than it had during many preceding centuries.' *Jos. De B. J.* 11. 6. 2. p. 156. Haverc.

^a *Antiquit. Judaicar. Lib. XVII. cap. vi. §. 5. p. 845, 846; De Bello Jud. Lib. I. cap. xxxiii. §. 6. p. 141.* A short time before the breath departed from

love for him, and by their fidelity to God, not to refuse him this last honour.' In such a ravenous beast in human form it was one of the smallest crimes^b, if deaf to the voice of pity and humanity, and unaffected by the innocence of the children and the poignant grief of their disconsolate mothers, he inhumanly dragged them from the arms of their parents, and put them to death with the ferocity of a tiger^c.—St. Matthew informs us,

his body, Antipater also, his eldest son, was put to death by his command, because, it being believed that the king his father was dead, he was about to take upon himself the succession. *Antiquit. XVII. cap. vii. p. 247*; and, *De Bello Jud. I. cap. 33. §. 7. p. 141*.

^b The character of this miserable man, drawn by the hand of a master, is to be found in Sterne's *Sermmons*.

^c Although Josephus has not related this history, of which omission the cause is not difficult to be discovered, (see Lardner's *Credibility of the G. M. Past.* vol. ii. p. 224—225. 18th edit.) yet the whole character which he ascribes to this Jewish king, is the most evident confirmation of the barbarous deed mentioned by

us^d, that Jesus had been in Egypt: and this is confirmed even by Celsus

by the Evangelist. Macrobius, a heathen writer of the fourth century, relates of Augustus, 'Quum audisset inter pueros, quos in Syria Herodes Rex Judæorum intra bimatum jussu interfecit, filium quoque ejus occisum, ait, "Melius est Herodis porcum esse quam filium." Saturnal. Lib. II. cap. iv. Now although Macrobius is far too modern to be produced as a valid evidence in this matter, and his story is magnified with an erroneous circumstance; yet the cited passage serves to prove, how universally notorious was the murder of the children in Bethlehem, which was committed by Herod's orders.—Voltaire, either from ignorance and inconsiderateness, or from dishonesty, asserts (*Diction. philosoph. articl. Christianisme*), that 14,000 children must have lost their lives in this massacre. If this were true, the silence of Josephus would be truly a very important objection to the veracity of St. Matthew's narrative: and with this view Voltaire makes the assertion, who always shews himself an inveterate enemy of revealed, and not rarely of natural, religion also.—But Bethlehem was a very small place; scarcely two thousand persons existed in it and in its dependant district. Now the male children alone were put to death; consequently in this massacre not more than fifty at most were slain. In the description of the life of such a tyrant this was so trifling an act of cruelty, that it was but of small consequence in the history of his bloody government. See Büsching's '*Harmony of the evangelists*,' I. 216. 217. of the original.

^d Chap. ii

x 3

himself,

himself, who takes occasion from it to throw out the accusation, that he had there learned the arts of magic^e.—That Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governour in Judea, is likewise related by Tacitus^f.—The account of John the Baptist, who was unjustly put to death by Herod Antipas the Tetrarch^g, is found also in Josephus^h. The coincidence is remarkable. The Jewish historian relates that Herod had married his brother Philip's wife: and this very cir-

^e See Origen's work against Celsus.

^f Annal. Lib. XV. cap. xlv. p. 279. edit. Antwerp. 1607. fol. Nero put the guilt of the terrible fire at Rome, as Tacitus here relates, on the Christians. 'Auctor nominis ejus, continues he, (namely, Christiani) Christus, qui Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat.' The agreement of many more circumstances of this last suffering of Jesus with the accounts of foreign writers is shewn by Lardner in his *Credibility of the G. H.* p. 1. vol. i. 299 and following pages. 1st edit.

^g Matth xiv. 1—12.

^h Antiq. Lib. XVIII. cap. v. §. 1, 2. p. 883, 884.

cumstance

cumstance is asserted by St. Matthew to have been the cause of John's execution. Immediately after he informs us, that the Jews pronounced the overthrow which Herod had suffered, to have been a divine punishment for his having slain John, who was surnamed the Baptist. *Κτενει γαρ ταυτον Ἡρωδης, αγαθον ανδρα και τις Ιουδαις κειλευοντα, αρετην επασκεντας και τη προ^ς αλληλης δικαιοσυνη και προ^ς του Θεου ευσεβεια χρωμενες βαπτισμω συνιεναι.* *For Herod had put to death this man; a pious person who exhorted the Jews to practice virtue, to shew fidelity to one another and reverence towards God, and with such hearts to come to be baptized.* In exact coincidence are described the doctrines and behaviour of John by the Evangelists¹.--St. Luke cursorily relates², that the Emperour Claudius banished

¹ Matth. iii. 1. ii. 5—10. Mark i. 1—5. Luke iii. 1—14.

² Acts xviii. 1, 2.

the Jews from Rome: and Suetonius gives us the same account¹, Judæos, says he, impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit^m.—The person whom St. Peter raised from the dead at Joppa, was named Tabitha or Dorcasⁿ: and it appears from Josephus that this name (which seems to imply something tender) was actually at that time in common use^o.—According to St. Luke's information^p a great dearth prevailed throughout all Judæa^q, in the reign of Claudius: Josephus speaks of the same, and describes it as so terrible, that a great multitude

¹ Vita Claudii.

^m Comp. Lardner's Jewish and heathen testimonies, vol. i.

ⁿ Act. ix. 36.

^o See Otii Animadversiones in Josephum, Oper. edit. Haverc. vol. ii. p. 313.

^p Acts xi. 28, 29.

^q Ὁλὴ οἰκισμένη is sometimes used in scriptural language for a particular country only. See Lardner's Credib. of the G. H. Part I. vol. i. 521 and following pages. 2d. edit.

of

of persons died of hunger'.—The tragical end of King Herod Agrippa² is related by St. Luke³ and Josephus⁴ with so much harmony, that had the latter been a Christian, one would have certainly believed that he intended to write a commentary on that narrative. This haughty monarch put off the Tyrians and Sidonians, who solicited a peace with him, until a certain day⁵.

And

² Antiq. XX. cap. ii. § 6. p. 950. coll. cap. v. §. 2. p. 965.

³ This Herod was the son of Aristobulus, and grandson of Herod the Great. By the favour of the emperours Caligula and Claudius he was raised to royal dignity; and almost all the lands which his grand-father had possessed were by degrees bestowed upon him. Josephus Antiq. XVIII. cap. vii. §. 10. p. 896, 897. XIX. cap. v. §. 1. p. 943.

⁴ Acts xii. 20—23.

⁵ Antiq. Lib. XIX. cap. viii. §. 2. p. 650, 651.

⁶ Josephus has not mentioned this particular circumstance. But he informs us, that the termination of the king's life succeeded a festal day, which had been appointed in honour of the emperour. From this circumstance we may conceive why Herod put off the
the

And upon a set day^x Herod, arrayed in royal apparel^y, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a God, and not of a man^z! And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him^a, because

the ambassadors from Tyre and Sidon to that express day; namely, that he might shew himself with so much greater pomp to the people.

^x Josephus determines it more particularly. It was the second day of the Festival, which was celebrated at Cæsarea in honour of the emperor.

^y A robe embroidered with silver, from which rays of the sun reflected a dazzling splendor, which set all the spectators in astonishment. Josephus.

^z His flatterers (says Josephus who prolongs this shout to an improbable extent) named him *a God*, and entreated him to be propitious to them, saying, *Heretofore we have honoured you as a man: but now we acknowledge, that you are exalted above mortal nature.*

^a Josephus has inserted here a superstitious story: that Herod perceived an owl sitting on a certain cord over his head, and consequently held it to be an unfortunate omen. The fact itself he thus relates: that immediately afterwards the king was seized with a violent illness, and carried to his palace.

he gave not God the glory^b: and he was eaten of worms^c, and gave up the ghost^d. Both historians relate the fact, as to the chief particulars, in the same manner. St. Luke describes the pride of the king, as well as the nature of his illness more circumstantially; and omits the superstitious addition of the owl, which is related by Josephus. A proof, that St. Luke surpasses in fidelity, accuracy, and judgment even this learned historian of the Jews.—When St. Paul, in an uproar which the Jews at Jerusalem excited against him, was taken prisoner, the Roman Chiliarch, ac-

^b The very same cause is assigned by Josephus, namely, because Herod had not punished the blasphemous flattery of the people.

^c Josephus has not described the illness so circumstantially. The king, says he, felt violent pains about the heart, and in the bowels. St. Luke determines the cause more scientifically. The pain in the bowels proceeded from worms, by which he was eaten.

^d After he had been continually tormented during five days by dreadful pains in his bowels, he expired. Josephus:

cording

cording to St. Luke's relation, demanded of him, *Art not thou that Egyptian, who a short time ago, madest an uproar and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand murderers*?* Josephus explains to us this history, which St. Luke has mentioned only casually. An Egyptian[†] pretended during the government of Felix (consequently at the time mentioned by St. Luke) that he was a prophet; led with him into the wilderness a multitude of thirty thousand men; and marched against Jerusalem, promising, that the walls of the city should fall down immediately at his command; but was attacked by Felix, and escaped with a small part of his army.—Of this remarkable harmony with foreign his-

* *Act. xxi. 38.*

† *De bello Judaico, Lib. II. cap. xiii. §. 5. p. 177, 178. Antiq. Lib. XX. cap. viii. §. 6. p. 972, 973.*

‡ Josephus also has no where given us the name of this impostor, but only spoken of him under the appellation of 'the Egyptian.'

torians I will produce only two further examples, and these on account of their opposite characters.—St. Paul, according to the Acts of the Apostles^b, in his speech before the governor Felix and his wife Drusilla discourses on the virtues of justice and chastity, and on the judgment hereafter to be holden on men for the violation of them. It must appear surprising to a reflecting reader why the Apostle did not here speak on the fundamental articles of Christianity, on the resurrection of Jesus, &c.; and what reason could have induced him to select the above-mentioned virtues in particular for the subject of his discourse. Tacitus and Josephus clear up this difficulty, and explain the cause. According to their information the character of Felix is infamous, on account of the extortions which he had

^b xxiv. 24, 25.

committed in Judea, and of the scandalous commerce in which he lived with Drufilla, the wife of King Azizus, whom he seduced and married, while her husband was still alive¹. With this character the narration of St. Luke is perfectly concordant. St. Paul speaks before Felix and Drufilla of the judgments of God on injustice and unchastity. What could have been more terrible to such an audience? Felix trembled at the discourse! Nevertheless he held several conferences with the Apostle, because he harboured the mean design of extorting money from him². What else could be expected from a

¹ Tacitus historiarum, Lib. V. cap. ix. p. 428. edit. cit. Claudius . . . Judæam provinciam equitibus Romanis aut libertis permisit, e quibus Antonius Felix, per omnem sævitiam ac libidinem jus regium fervili ingenio exercuit, Drufilla Cleopatæ et Antonii nepte in matrimonium accepta. The history of this Drufilla is related by Josephus more circumstantially. Antiq. Lib. XX. cap. vii. §. 1, 2. p. 969, 970.

² Ver. 26.

man who lived in the public exercise of such violent injustice and adulterous marriage? This history in a two-fold manner confirms the credibility of the scriptural writers; it shews how little St. Paul suppressed the truth even when his temporal interest seemed to require it; and how accurately St. Luke's narratives harmonize with the accounts of foreign historians.—How honourable, on the other hand, is the conduct which St. Luke¹ attributes to Gallio, the Roman proconsul in Achaia! What justice, impartiality, prudence, and mild disposition shine forth in his answer to the accusation of the Jews against St. Paul! "If it concerned an unjust or wicked action, reason would demand that I should support you. But as the contest concerns words, names, and your law, it is your own business. I will be no judge in such

¹ Acts xviii. 14—16.

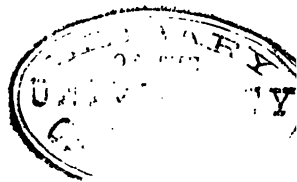
matters."

matters." And this agrees exactly with the honourable picture of him which foreign writers have drawn^a.

Such a perfect coincidence with foreign contemporary historians in such trifling events, and in circumstances which are related only cursorily, establishes not only the authenticity of these writings, but is also a palpable proof of the *integrity* and *credibility* of their authors. Not less remarkable are the *characters* of the Gospel-history, whom we find numerous and very distinct. The writers are evidently devoid of every species of art; yet the persons whom they introduce act so naturally and consistently, that we feel they are characters drawn from life.—Pilate is convinced that the political accusations against Jesus are perfectly groundless; he attempts re-

^a Nemo mortalium uni tam dulcis est quam hic omnibus. Seneca, nat. quæst, l. 4. Tacitus Annal. Lib. XV. extr. p. 290.

peatedly



peatedly to acquit him; yet not only against his own conviction, but even against his inclination, suffers him to be scourged, and even crucified: and all from the dread of being accused to Cæsar by the Jews. What a striking portrait of an unprincipled courtier!—who moreover (as was the case of Pilate, according to Tacitus) had been guilty of many exactions, and therefore found it necessary to cover one act of injustice and cruelty by another.—Judas Iscariot commits a crime of the foulest nature; he betrays his master, benefactor and friend for the paltry sum of a few pieces of silver. Notwithstanding the conciliatory, mild and amiable warning of his Lord he remains fixed in his barbarous determination, puts himself at the head of the murderers, goes boldly into the presence of his friend, and uses the most tender mark of friendship as the signal of treachery. The language of his
r friend

friend which might have been thought sufficient to have melted the most frozen heart, *Judas, betrayest thou me—with a kiss?* even this does not make him alter his resolution. His conduct probably, as we are taught by the event, was influenced by a hope, that his Lord would find means to liberate himself by those miraculous powers, which he had seen him so often exhibit. And when this expectation proved false, he proceeds to the magistracy of the Jews, confesses his crime, declares the innocence of Jesus, returns the money, and hangs himself. A frightful scene! But how well does it harmonize with the character of a covetous wretch as Judas was, according to the Evangelists,—and of a man who had been for some years a constant eye-witness of the ministry and actions of Jesus! A person of the finest talents could scarcely contrive a deceit so consistently: it was certainly totally impossible to one whose mind was devoid of cultivation,

cultivation, and whose employment from infancy had been the business of a fisherman.

St. Peter is involved in a crime almost similar. But the event is perfectly different. A look of his friend recalls him; and awakens the nobler sentiments of repentance, and confidence in the favour of his Lord. How accurately does this accord with the source of his crime, as given by the Evangelist! He sinned not from an established and predominant evil inclination; but from temerity and inordinate passion.—Among all the writers of the New Testament none use arguments drawn from the love of honour more copiously, no one warns against pride more strongly, or exhorts more forcibly to heroic courage than St. Peter; this Peter who is continually distinguished by the Evangelists for re-

^a 1 Pet. v. 5, 6.

resolution, heroic courage, and love of honour.

St. John also at first deserts his Master, but soon returns, follows him into the palace of the High Priest, accompanies him to the cross, remains there until he had expired, and takes upon himself the duties of a son towards the mother of his friend. And scarcely is the rumour heard that the grave is empty, but he is one of the first who hasten thither. We could expect no other conduct from a person who possessed a heart so tender, so sensible, and so truly affectionate towards Jesus, as is attributed to St. John in the evangelical history.

St. Thomas, after the resurrection of Jesus, behaves not less agreeably to his accustomed resolution, which degenerated almost to obstinacy. We see here the very same person who formerly, when all the others opposed Jesus' return to Judea, alone arose and encouraged

couraged his fellow disciples*, *Let us also go, that we may die with him*†.

And lastly, by what means were the Apostles, unlettered fishermen, enabled to draw such a character as is the character of Jesus; since it has not a parallel either in the history of their own country or of any other? Wherefore did they attribute in particular such mild, patient virtues to their Messiah, in whom the whole nation expected an enterprising and successful warrior?

Many farther proofs of *Integrity* of the like kind may be found in their books.—The writers of the New Testament discover the utmost abhorrence of the crime of deceit and dishonesty; and preach an integrity which does not allow men to utter even an indif-

* John xi. 16.

† See Secker's Sermons: and also Lardner on the internal marks of the credibility of the N. T. in the 'Memoirs of the life and writings of the late reverend Nath. Lardner.' London. 1769.

ferent untruth¹. — They deliver convincing proofs that they themselves possessed this virtue, which they inculcate on others under the penalty of the divine wrath. They nowhere break out in their own praise; and when St. Paul was under the necessity of relating his extraordinary endowments before the false apostles, with what timid modesty does he speak²! They do not suppress even their own failings; they relate the astonishment and stupidity of the Apostles at the discourses of Jesus³; the disgraceful infidelity which they manifested towards him under his sufferings⁴; the denial of St. Peter⁵; his dissimulation at Antioch⁶; the indiscreet

¹ Rom. xii. 9. Ephes. iv. 25. 1 Peter i. 22. ii. 21, 22.

² 2 Corinth. xii.

³ Luke xviii. 31—34.

⁴ Matth. xxvi. 56.

⁵ Matth. xxvi. 69—75.

⁶ Gal. ii. 11—21.

and

and furious zeal of St. Paul^a.—They establish no separate sects. No one of them puts himself at the head of a party. On the contrary, they caution men most earnestly against all party spirit; and unanimously exhort them to receive and to reverence no other than the invisible Jesus as their only Head, their Teacher, and their Redeemer^c. — They relate without disguise facts which evil-minded persons might easily pervert to the disadvantage of their history and doctrine; That, for instance, the disciples of Jesus could not heal a sick man^d; that Jesus, during his passion, had endured violent sorrow and agony^e; that he performed no miracles at Nazareth^f; that on the day of Pentecost some of the spectators accused the Apostles of drunk-

^a Acts ix. Rom. ix. 2.

^c 1 Cor. i. 10—16, &c.

^d Matth. xvii. 16.

^e Matth. xxvi. 38, 39.

^f Mark vi. 4, 5.

kenness^c; that Paul and Barnabas quarrelled and separated^d. If their cause had been an imposture, they would indisputably have suppressed every thing of this nature.—Again, the doctrines which they preached were directly hostile to the ruling taste of their times, and to the darling passions of all mankind: the overthrow of idolatrous worship; the abrogation of the Mosaic law; salvation through the mediation of one who had been crucified; the extirpation of all inordinate and extravagant appetites; a perfectly spotless and heroic courage. And the whole manner in which they exhibited their doctrines and history bears the visible stamp of the greatest honesty. Without any anxiety to prove the truth of their narratives; without any rhetorical arts to recommend them to others; without any artful and con-

^c Acts ii. 13.

^d Acts xv. 39.

cealed

veiled obscurity, they mention their history as a matter which must be either known to all their contemporaries, or which could be examined and its truth or falsehood discovered without much trouble. The confidence and sure conviction with which they write is particularly apparent where they speak of the exercise of their miraculous powers. They relate these astonishing facts without any ornaments of language, or oratorical flights, but with the most common expressions, and in the most concise and simple manner ; when they speak of them, they bring to the remembrance of their contemporaries the artful religious deceits with which the heathen priests imposed on the people, and led them like irrational animals* ; they appeal to these their supernatural gifts in opposition to those which they sharply reprov'd ; and this, when ad-

* 1 Cor. xii. 1, 2.

dreſſing

addressing themselves to communities in which they had many personal enemies^f. In short, they speak with such certainty, with so much self-conviction, and with such confidence, of the truth of their history, that assuredly we can no longer confide in any historian whatever, if we entertain the least doubt concerning the honesty of the writers of the New Testament.

SECT. VI.

They relate Events which happened in their own Times.

THE writers of the New Testament relate their history *at a time* when it was almost *impossible to have forged it*. —They inform us not of events which happened at the other extremity of the world many ages ago: as that a person perfectly unknown to posterity had,

^f 1 Cor. xii. xiv. Gal. ii. 1-4.

many

many centuries before their times, performed wonderful things in Britain. No, on the contrary—at Jerusalem they relate events which they assert to have happened at Jerusalem.—Events which took place in the times, and, in part, before the eyes, of persons who were then alive².—Events which tended to injure, and reflect dishonour on, the principal persons in the city.—These events they relate not in obscure corners of the town, in the presence of one or two insignificant persons: but in public places, in the schools of the Jews, before the highest tribunal of the nation. In the courts of justice of the Jewish kings and Roman governours they relate—that Jesus, who in the presence of all the people and of the chief and most learned men of their nation had proved himself by miraculous actions to be the long expected

² Acts ii. 32—24.

Messiah,

Messiah, had given to the human race the most noble and salutary doctrines, and led a most holy, innocent, and beneficent life, had been persecuted with ferocious cruelty by the chiefs of the people, until they brought him to the cross; that this same Jesus, nevertheless, a few days after his death had arisen, and had been seen at Jerusalem by many persons. This the Apostles avow freely, publicly, and in the presence of men who flourished at the time they assert their history to have happened. They are thrown into prison, laid in irons, scourged, some of them put to death, and the others threatened with a similar fate. But not a single person arises to shew the falshood of their narrative.—They not only relate this viva voce, but also publish it in writings, addressed to places where considerable Jewish communities then existed; and at a time when they universally opposed the spread of Christianity

2

tianity with the greatest violence.—Four men publish accounts of these events at different times. None of the succeeding historians would certainly ever have ventured to have laid them again before the public, if the narrative of the preceding had already been acknowledged false.—And this their history is the relation of public and very interesting events, of a tendency no less important than the reformation of the whole existing world.—A man must not only be deceived, or a notorious impostor, to utter falsehoods under such circumstances, but absolutely insane. We must, therefore, pronounce the writers of the New Testament either to have been out of their senses;—or grant—that they did not forge their narrative, but, as to themselves, were perfectly convinced of its truth.

SECT. VII.

They appeal to notorious proofs.

HAD they not been convinced of the truth of what they relate, but impostors,—they would by no means have appealed to such proofs as depend only on the *organs of sense*, and which might have been *easily examined* by any, even the most simple person. In order to prove the truth of their history and doctrine, they do not appeal, like Mahomet, to secret visions of spirits, nocturnal journies to heaven, or things which, as he pretended, took place in secret.—They appeal to *Miracles* which they had performed in the presence of their auditors, and in the midst of large communities. ‘My preaching among you consisted not in the subtle discourses of sophistry, but in proofs of the miraculous power of the
Holy

Holy Ghost^a.—God has evinced that this doctrine came from Him, through miracles and through a variety of miraculous gifts¹.—And yet more—They assert that they had even imparted to their hearers the power of working miracles; that only by laying their hands on them they had enabled them to speak fluently foreign languages which they had never learned, to heal the sick by a mere word, and even to prophesy. ‘I, who have given you the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, and wrought miracles among you, have I preached to you the law of Moses, or the doctrine of faith^k?—To one of you is given the gift of languages, to another the gift of healing sicknesses, to a third yet other miraculous powers^l.’

^a 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.

¹ Heb. ii. 3, 4. See also 2 Cor. xii. 12. Galat. iii. 5.

¹ 1 Thess. i. 5.

^k Galat. iii. 5.

^l 1 Cor. xii. xiii.

—St. Paul appeals in the presence of large communities, at Corinth, a town of considerable consequence, and much frequented; in Galatia; and before Jewish converts, who were by no means well disposed towards him; before communities, in which were his most bitter enemies, who had actually formed themselves into a party against him; in Epistles, wherein he gives them sharp reproofs,—appeals to *miracles* which he had performed before them; and to *miraculous gifts*, which he had imparted, and which continued to exist among them. Still more than all this, he himself announces, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, a new miracle which he would perform, in proof of his divine mission, on an incestuous person, though at a distance, by inflicting on him a severe disease^a.—Now, in these cases, deceit or fanati-

^a 1 Cor. v. 3—5.

cism is absolutely impossible. For, notwithstanding these circumstances, it would have been certainly impossible for the Apostle ever to have persuaded the Corinthians, Galatians, and Hebrews that they could speak foreign languages, with which they in fact had no acquaintance; that they could heal the sick, whom they in fact could not heal; or that the incestuous person was fallen into a severe illness, when they knew him to be perfectly well. St. Paul and the other writers of the New Testament, must have been absolutely out of their senses if they had spoken in this manner without foundation and truth. And supposing that they had done so, like the modern pretenders to inspiration, who in London promised to raise the dead to life; then the same effects would have followed in the former case, which happened in the latter. They would have been considered as visionaries and
z madmen,

madmen, their religion as absurdity and imposture. Now as this did not happen, but on the contrary their persons and religion found such credit and extensive reception, this fact is therefore a perfectly convincing and incontrovertible proof,—I might justly assert, of the *historical certainty of their miracles*, and of the *divinity of their religion*; but here I content myself with saying—of the *entire credibility of these men*.

SECT. VIII.

They had nothing to expect but temporal disadvantages.

AND what was there which could have instigated them to forge these circumstances, and to propagate them with such perseverance?—What had they to expect from their evidence? A miserable life; bitter raileries and
 2 scorn

scorn from the philosophers of their time; cruel persecutions from the Jews, from the heathen priests, merchants, and magistracy. For the history which they published must necessarily have appeared absurd to wittings and imaginary philosophers; and had a tendency not less important than the entire overthrow of the whole idolatrous worship of the Gentiles, and the abolition of the religion of the Jews.— But, it may be urged, were not these consequences of their preaching unexpected? No: they themselves foresaw that their doctrine would be ridiculed by the philosophers^a of their time, and persecuted by the powerful with the sword and the cross^b.

^a 1 Cor. i. 19.

^b Rom. viii. 15—19. 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

SECT. IX.

They suffered for the truth of their narration every thing, even death. —And brought many of their contemporaries to the sure conviction of its truth.

AFTER all that has been said, should any suspicion of dishonesty still remain, it must instantly vanish when we reflect that these witnesses suffered so many afflictions and sufferings; such bitter and mortifying affronts; many of them the most grievous torments and the most painful death with such composure and truly heroic tranquillity, for the sake of their evidence, and still continued to support it even to their last breath,—and that by their testimony, they so certainly convinced a vast number of their contemporaries, who, without any trouble, could have proved

proved the truth or falshood of their history, that even these likewise sacrificed their temporal happiness and their lives to its truth.—During the lifetime of some of them, that is, before the conclusion of the first century, numerous communities of Christians were already formed in all the three parts of the then known world. Their doctrine found great support in Asia, at Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Smyrna, Laodicea, Cæsarea, &c.: in Africa, at Alexandria: in Europe, at Rome the metropolis of the world, Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi: and in many other great, civilised and flourishing places^p. These

^p See Benson's History of the first planting of the Christian religion. London, 1744, vol. ii. in 4to. Fabricii, Salutaris lux toti mundo exoriens, Hamburg, 1731, in 4to. in which is given a catalogue of those Christian communities which can be proved to have been planted in the time of the Apostles.—Among the first conversions none is more remarkable than that of St. Paul, Acts ix. and xxvi. 1—23. Lyttleton has shewn in his 'Observations on the conversion and

These communities did not consist of merely low, mean, and ignorant people: but many great and learned men acknowledged themselves to belong to their communion. Among their first followers are found the Proconsul Sergius Paulus³; Dionysius, a member of the council of Arsacapsa, together with his wife, and many other Athenians⁴; several persons belonging to the court of the emperor Nero⁵; Erastus, chamberlain at Corinth⁶; some of the prelates of Asia⁷; and Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, Ter-

apostleship of St. Paul, in a letter to Gilbert West, that this event cannot be attributed to the deceit of others, nor to the deceit or fanaticism of St. Paul himself; but that it is true, and consequently an incontrovertible proof of the divinity of the Christian religion.

³ Acts xiii. 7—12.

⁴ Acts xvii. 34.

⁵ Philipp. iv. 22.

⁶ Rom. xvi. 23.

⁷ Acts xix. 31.

tullian,

tullian, Hegesippus, Melito, Miltiades, Pantænus, Hippolitus Portuensis, Ammonius and Origen: men, of whom some were Philosophers, and accurately acquainted with the best writings, and all the learning of the Gentiles*.

All these persons lived at a time when, with inconsiderable trouble and without the application of much learning, they might have inquired into the truth or falshood of the Christian history. It deserves to be remarked here, that even in the *third century* persons were alive, who had communicated with the *contemporaries* of the Apostles; and consequently might have derived the evidence for the truth or falshood of those events from the *first* sources. St. John the Apostle lived until the year of Christ 100. Polycarp, his disciple and most intimate friend, and who was personally acquainted with some

* See above, Part I. Book II.

of the other Apostles, until 167. His disciple, Irenæus, who was in habits of intercourse with many of the immediate contemporaries and scholars of the Apostles, lived until 202. Origen, the oracle of the Christians, who was celebrated about this time at Alexandria, and was connected with the most considerable christians in Egypt and in almost the whole of the East, had consequently without doubt collected information on the Christian history from many persons, who, as well as Irenæus, had received their intelligence from the immediate contemporaries of the Apostles.—But the many thousands who became Christians in the *first century* were far better qualified for that inquiry: since Christianity was preached at a time when learning of every kind flourished under the government of the Romans; and received its origin in a country which at that period, though its governours
and

and military concerns had frequent intercourse with the Romans and with the most polished nations of the world.

- These men, of whom some were distinguished by rank and learning, and all in a condition to examine into the truth of the Christian history with little or no trouble; who were educated in religions and customs (and who is ignorant of the power of custom and education?) which Christianity absolutely rejected; received this history and embraced the religion.—A religion, which obliged them to change entirely their whole course of life, all their former actions and inclinations^{*}; which every moment endangered their goods, their consequence, and their lives. To this religion, which demanded nothing less than the sacrifice of all their former modes of thinking, customs, and darling passions; to this

^{*} Ephes. iv. 17—24. v. 1—21.

religion,

religion, I say, they were so devoted, and embraced it with *so much zeal*, that multitudes sacrificed to it all their comforts, wealth, peace, and consequence; and, which is still more, the love of their families: and, still confessing its truth, suffered steadily and with a composure both tranquil and rational the most horrible tortures and the most painful death.

Here, therefore, we have another and very forcible proof of the credibility of the writers of the New Testament. A number of men, consisting of many hundreds and thousands, among whom were several of considerable consequence and learning, arose and testified with admirable consistency to the truth of facts, which they had every opportunity of knowing and proving. And this their testimony is equally as weighty as if they had left it in writing,

7 See the following 1 and 2 Ch. of 2 Book.

and that writing had been transmitted down to us. "For," to use the words of Butler*, "were a fact expressly related by one or more ancient historians, and disputed in after ages; that this fact is acknowledged to have been believed by great numbers of the age in which the historian says it was done, would be allowed an additional proof of such fact, quite distinct from the express testimony of the historian. The credulity of mankind is acknowledged: and the suspicions of mankind ought to be acknowledged too; and their backwardness ever to believe, and greater still to practice, what makes against their interest."

* Butler's Analogy of religion natural and revealed to the course of nature. p. 335, 336. Edit. 1791.

BOOK II.

The wonderful Establishment and Propagation of Christianity, is a most convincing Proof of the entire Credibility of the History of the New Testament, and of the Religion which it establishes.

CHAP. I.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WONDERFUL PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY.

I. *Christianity spreads itself almost immediately over the whole World.*

IT is truly astonishing how widely Christianity had extended itself almost immediately at its first rise. In less than fifty years numerous Christian
com-

communities had been established in every part, and in the most considerable cities, of the then known world^z. The little seed was already grown up to a lofty and wide-spreading tree; and in the two following centuries it cast its beneficent shade continually wider towards the East and West. In the beginning of the fourth century the whole of the great and extensive empire of the Romans was filled with Christians, who held the most considerable employments in the state. The very courts of the heathen emperours contained men of scarcely any other persuasion. Under the persecution of Dioclesian, a whole city in Phrygia was burnt, because all the inhabitants had embraced that faith. Some of the emperours, (as Maxentius, for instance) were obliged to spare the Christians on account of the people at Rome. It

^z See above, p. 340, 341.

was this externally flourishing state of the Church, from the dissensions and vices which it occasioned, that became the principal cause of the terrible persecutions of the Christians in the fourth century*. Lastly, in the person of Constantine the Great, Christianity ascended even the imperial throne.

II. It prevailed without the Assistance of any temporal Power.

THIS rapid and successful progress was not effected by any human power. No prince, king, or emperor had adopted it. No sword was drawn in its cause; no armies took the field; no territories were conquered. It could neither procure riches for its followers, nor exalt them to employments of consequence. On the contrary, amidst poverty and obscurity; and intirely de-

* See the beautiful extract from Eusebius in Dr. Semler's Hist. eccl. l. 100.

void of all temporal influence and greatness did Christianity exist in the world until the fourth century. Instead of being supported and extended by earthly power and magnificence, it was rather obstructed by that very cause. Its exaltation to the throne was the epoch of its decline both externally and internally.

III. Through thirteen poor, inconsiderable, unlearned, and almost unknown men.

ABOUT thirteen men^b, who were members of a nation, despised by the Romans and Greeks; of the meanest extraction; brought up from their infancy in the employment of fishermen; formed in no schools of the rhetoricians; unacquainted with any part of the wisdom of the philosophers, or of

^b See above, Part II. B. I.

the knowledge of the learned; abandoned; persecuted; hated by all, even by their relatives;—these men arise, relate the history of Jesus, assert his resurrection and his numerous miracles; and on this foundation preach Christianity. And Jews, Greeks, Romans, and the whole world embrace their doctrine.

IV. *Amidst the most dangerous internal disturbances and distractions.*

MANY philosophers and scholars also became Christians. These men began in the second century, by introducing their fancies and errors, to deform the amiable simplicity of this religion; to obscure its splendour, and to diminish its strength. And now appear various Heretics; this society, which had been most cordially united in the bands of love, is severed into numerous sects; genuine christian virtue continually

nually decreases ; and superstition, fanaticism and vice occupy its place. Thus, so early as the beginning of the second century, the Christian Religion was compelled to struggle with dangerous enemies even in its own bosom !

V. Under the most cruel external persecutions, and the opposition of the whole world.

FROM *without*, if not more dangerous yet more powerful and terrible enemies united themselves against it. Christianity had an object no less important than the overthrow of the superstition of the Jews, and the idolatrous worship of the Gentiles ; which comprehended the whole of the existing world. It was therefore opposed by all. The powerful and rich Jews who were spread over every region of the Roman empire, at Jerusalem, in Palestine, at Damascus, at Alexandria,
at

at Rome, employed all their power and artifice to extirpate the Christian name from the face of the earth. The Apostles were many times scourged and banished; St. Stephen stoned; the Christians expelled from Jerusalem; St. James beheaded; St. Paul chased from one place to another, imprisoned, scourged; and, in a word, the wrath of the Roman magistracy together with the fury of the people, every thing was summoned up in order to choke the tender plant in its first shooting.— Among the *Gentiles* religion was a part of their polity, and so interwoven with the state and civil government, that the governors and magistracy opposed any alteration of the established religion as strenuously as they would have resisted the overthrow of their own authority and the destruction of the state. These magistrates were also in general the *Priests* of Paganism. And where this was not the case, yet even there the

whole body of the priesthood derived their subsistence from this imposture; obtained from it their high civil privileges, were very numerous and very powerful in the state; and stood, from the above mentioned causes, in the most intimate connection with the magistracy. The people blindly followed these conductors. Their education, and customs inherited from father to son, made the worship of idols a second nature to them; and their vicious appetites could find nothing more convenient or more desirable than a religion which sold all the favours of the Gods for sacrifices, incense, purifications and similar corporeal ceremonies. They who were called *Philosophers* at that time were so violently captivated with that to which they applied the term wisdom, namely, with their metaphysical fancies, sceptical follies, and rhetorical arts; that they set in motion, all the powers of ridicule, and all the
artifices

artifices of sophistry to banish a religion from the world, which so simplified the whole system of wisdom and established it in such a manner as to be comprehended by every capacity, and founded all the happiness of the human race on one that had been crucified. Thus then *all* that was powerful in the Heathen world became most zealously hostile to the Christian faith. From the time of Nero, the emperours of Rome enacted laws, intended for the extirpation of Christianity. This tyrant commanded its followers to be sewn up in the skins of beasts, and these saturated with oil, to be lighted up by night for a public spectacle. But it was not the cruel Nero alone who persecuted the Christians; even the mild Trajan, and the philanthropic Marcus Antoninus ordered that they should be compelled by imprisonments and torments to renounce their religion,

gion*. In opposition to all these numerous and princely powers, in opposition to the whole Roman empire, were placed these poor, unlettered fishermen, joined by a Paul equally poor and inconsiderable. And—they not only defended themselves, but—even conquered: overthrew the united subtlety and power of emperours, kings, governors, generals, merchants, sophists, and of the people; and on the ruins of Judaism and Paganism founded—the religion of Jesus! It would have been apparently much easier for these thirteen men, alone and without any assistance, to have overthrown the whole Roman force, and to have placed themselves on the imperial throne†.

* See Franc. Balduini *Ad edicta vett. principum Romanorum de Christianis*, Mosheimii Institut. hist. eccles. maj., et Ruinarti *Præf. ad acta martyrum*.

† See Lyttelton. *On the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul*, and Jortin's *Discourses concerning the truth of the Christian religion*, p. 87—116 of the 2d Edition.

VI. *And although exciting the repugnance of the human heart.*

BUT perhaps—it may be said—they knew how to interest the sinful inclinations of the human heart in their favour?—Directly on the contrary, Christianity excites all these inclinations without exception against itself. And what is the power of kings and emperours, when compared with the enmity of the ruling passions of the human heart? The Religion of the New Testament announces the most irreconcilable hostility to pride, ambition, vanity, avarice, revenge, impurity, and every other sinful, that is, universally-injurious inclination and appetite. It requires of its followers that they shall not possess any such appetites and thoughts even in their hearts. It requires that they shall practice invariably and universally an unqualified,

unwearied, unrelaxed, and active philanthropy. It requires that they shall be cordially benevolent even to their enemies, and win and make them happy by acts of beneficence and blessings of every kind. It also requires us to sacrifice all our innocent pleasures and profits, in a word, all our temporal advantages, even health and life, to the general good of mankind, nay of our most mortal enemies; and suffer for their sake every kind of calamity, trouble, danger, and torment.—It declares that neither any viva voce confession of certain formularies, nor the exercise of any corporeal ceremonies; but that such a virtue as is grounded in the heart, which continually acts, and incessantly increases, is the only mean whereby we can obtain the favor of the Divinity, and the bliss of heaven. In this manner Christianity raised against itself the ruling passions of the human heart, and—the whole

whole world. And, yet, this small grain of mustard-seed, as the author of our holy religion had many times prophesied, became a large tree, on whose branches the birds of the air lodged; and grew up, like the seed which is sown, unobserved, and rapidly to the full grain in the ear*. Christianity converts millions in every part of the world; and though exposed to continually increasing dangers, extends itself abroad; and, lastly, at the present day, is embraced and confessed by the tenth part of the human race†.

* Matth. xiii. 31—33. Mark iv. 26—29.

† Robert Millar's History of the propagation of Christianity, London, 1731. 2 vols. in 8vo. contains much useful matter, particularly respecting the missions of Christians into heathen countries; but it is only a compilation from well known books; it cannot always be depended upon; nor is it by any means complete.—The reader will find in Fabricii Salutaris lux Evangelii toti orbi exorients, in 4to. an account of the writers on the history of Christianity.

CHAP. II.

That the old World was intolerant.

VOLTAIRE boldly asserts¹ that the Gentiles in general, and particularly the Romans, were by no means intolerant. 'Nothing,' he exclaims, 'was more social than the heathen religion: The Romans permitted the exercise of every religion, and considered religious tolerance as one of the most salutary laws of the state: This monster, this pest of the world, Intolerance, is a daughter of Christianity!'

¹ *Traité de la Tolérance, Si les Romains ont été tolérans.*

SECT.

SECT. I.

*Of the Egyptians, Grecians and
Romans.*

I. NOT to mention the old Persians, who destroyed all the statues in the temples of the Egyptians and Grecians; nor the Carthaginians, who were in the utmost degree jealous of the service of the Gods of their state—what do these adversaries of Christianity think of the incessant civil wars among the Egyptians? One province of the country waged war on another, because the latter worshipped the ox, the dog, the wolf, the cat, and other brute beasts, as gods, whilst the former slew and consumed them! What of that established law of the country which condemned to death the person who should destroy one of the animals to which divine honours were paid?

A Roman

A Roman, as Diodorus relates who was himself an eye-witness of the fact, had accidentally killed a cat, and was immediately put to death by the enraged people. From a similar cause the inhabitants of the city Ombi became engaged in a quarrel with those of Tentyra, which was conducted with so much violence, that the Tentyrans cut to pieces on the spot a citizen of Ombi, who had been taken prisoner, and ate him still reeking with blood.^b

Summus utrinque

Inde furor vulgo, quod numina vicinorum

Odit uterque locus, quum solos credat habendes

Esse deos, quos ipse colit^c.

II. If this be called tolerance the Grecians were also tolerant in a very high degree. At Athens every citizen

^b See Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and particularly Juvenal's 15th Satire, in which he paints the superstition and intolerance of the Egyptians, and relates that horrible history which took place in his time.

^c Juvenal, Sat. 15.

fwore

swore an oath that he would acknowledge the religion of the country, and defend it against every other. Certain laws forbade men to dispute concerning the gods, or to dishonour them under very heavy; and in some cases, mortal punishment^k. And their severity was felt by many of the most worthy men: Protagoras was driven into exile, because in his writings he had merely called in question the existence of the gods; and his works were publicly burned^l. Anaxagoras, the first who taught among them the doctrine of One Supreme Being, was condemned to death because he named the sun, which the Athenians worshipped as a divinity, a burning fire^m. And every one knows the fate of the greatest of all the philosophers of antiquity; who, on account of his purer and ex-

^k Strobæus De republ. serm. 41. Petiti Leg. att.

^l Cicero De nat. deor. I. 23.

^m Diogenes Laertius II.

cellent doctrines concerning God and Providence, was compelled to drink the poisoned bowl. His disciple also, the noble Plato, who has so affectingly described the martyrdom of Socrates; even he gives, under the laws of the wise state which he describes, this command—let the calumniators of the gods be first reprov'd, and if that be of no avail, let them be punished, even with death^a. And this was the ruling sentiment of all Greece, as is clearly evinced by what are called the holy, that is, the religious wars. At the time of Pericles, the Athenians waged war on the Lacedemonians, because they had, in common with the Phocians, the superintendence of the temple of Apollo at Delphi^b. At another time, a similar religious war was the pretext for Philip of Macedon to subjugate Greece. The Phocians had

^a De Legibus X.

^b Plutarch. in Pericle, Thucyd. I.

appropriated to themselves a field dedicated to Apollo at Delphi. The council of Amphictyons pronounced them on this account guilty of sacrilege; adjudged them to pay a certain sum of money; and on their refusing to pay it, war was solemnly proclaimed against them, in which all Greece took a part, and which continued with great violence during the space of ten years*. And who is ignorant of the cruelties and terrible torments by which Antiochus Epiphanes wished to compel the Jews to sacrifice to idols, and to renounce their paternal religion?

. III. But among the Romans, we are told, Intolerance was unknown; all sects enjoyed under them the most perfect liberty of conscience and religion. Yet was it one of the fundamental laws of the state (of the XII tables), '*Deos peregrinos ne colunto* ;'

* Diodorus Siculus XVI.

and

and Cicero, one of the greatest orators and lawyers, reckoned it among the most necessary laws of every wise state, 'Separatim nemo habessit deos, neve novos: sed ne advenas, nisi publice adscitos, privatim colunto'.¹ When, in the year of the city 326, a great drought and infectious disorder raged, superstition so far attained the superiority, that on every side were seen new gods and new forms of divine service. The government, therefore, enjoined the Ediles to be vigilant, 'Ne qui nisi Romani dii, neu quo alio more quam patrio colerentur'.² In like manner, under great disasters, the state was purified from foreign religions.³ Mæcenæ advised the Emperour Au-

¹ De Legibus II. 8.

² Livius Histon. IV. 30.

³ Livius Histon. IX. 30. XXV. 1. XXXIX. 16, Quoties hoc patrum avorumque ætate, negotium est magistratibus datum, ut sacra externa fieri vetarent, omnem disciplinam sacrificandi præterquam more Romano abolerent?

gustus to forbid not only atheism, but also all foreign divine-worship, both from religious and political principles. 'Worship,' said he to him^t, 'the gods yourself, and compel others to do the same. Abhor all those who would make any innovations in religion, and punish them.—Suffer no atheists, magicians, &c.'—Tiberius expelled from Rome all who were devoted to the Egyptian, Jewish, and in general, to any foreign divine-worship^u: four thousand of these men were, merely for the sake of their religion, sent to Sardinia to fight against the robbers, 'si ob gravitatem cœli interiissent, vile damnum;' and all the rest were chased out of Italy^w. I have already spoken of the hard and in part cruel persecutions of the Christians. Even the mild Trajan commanded Pliny to execute the Chris-

^t Dio Cassius, Lib. LII.

^u Suetonii, Tiber. I. 36.

^w Tacitus Annal, II. 83.

tians*. Not only the Romans, but also the Grecians, and in general all idolaters readily adopted foreign idolatrous worship: it was in fact a part of their religion; for they imagined that every nation, and every affair in the world had its peculiar god, and believed themselves to be safe in proportion to the number of the gods that they worshipped. But with so much greater severity did they persecute all foreign religions not established by the state; and more particularly the Christian, because it condemned all idolatrous worship, and all slavish adoration of the emperours. The laws, customs, and sentiments of the Egyptians, Grecians, and Romans put this matter beyond all doubt.

* Plinii Epist. Lib. X. ep. xcvi.—Cornelii van Bynkerkshoek opuscula, De cultu religionis peregrinæ apud vet. Roman. et Jo. Dan. ab Hoven Compensæ, Fasc. I. p. 33 f.

• SECT. II.

The doctrine of Christianity on this subject.

CHRISTIANITY was the very first system of religion which introduced among men an unlimited, enlightened and charitable toleration of all who professed religious articles different from its own. It is true, that the Mosaic law tolerated strangers, without compelling them to embrace the Israelitish religion: but they were obliged to renounce the worship of idols; and every idolater was punished with death. A severity which was rendered necessary by the existing situation of the world, and the vices and cruelties and assassinations, inseparably connected with the idolatrous worship of the times. The New Testament here also extends and exalts virtue. No man, according

to its laws, shall be despised on account of his religious opinions, be they ever so absurd and injurious; still less shall he be stigmatised by mortifying and calumniating appellations; and least of all condemned and pronounced incapable of the favour and bliss of God. It commands, further, that Christianity shall not be pressed on any heretic, and least of all through corporeal means. That those appointed for that purpose shall explain the Christian religion to him with sound arguments and mildness; but leave the choice entirely to his own judgement. That above all, the Christian shall desire and hope for the salvation of every man whose religious sentiments are erroneous, even though he be a contemner of religion or an atheist; love him as cordially as he would a believing brother; act with benevolence and beneficence towards him; and pray to God for his happiness.

piners'. That, in this manner, the Christian shall on the one side avoid and flee from every error; abominate in particular those which are pernicious to the general welfare, consequently most of all errors in religious concerns: and labour on the contrary with all earnestness and zeal after truth, particularly in religion, the highest concern of man. On the other side, he shall be attached with brotherly love to him who errs, is deceived, or led into sin; recommend to him at proper opportunities the truth with firmness and fervency; endeavour to win him by every action of kindness and beneficence: but give up to his own judgment the perfect liberty of choice. Such a tolerance, absolutely unlimited, and purified from all indifference towards the truth, is taught, and indeed was first taught by Christianity!—In-

7 Matth. x. 13. John vi. 66—68. Rom. xiv.
2 Cor. i. 24. iv. 2, 3, and other places.

tolerance on the other hand is, according to its principles, not only—to afflict men with civil punishments on account of mere matters of religion; to compel them to renounce their religion; or to put them to death for the sake of it: but also, to refuse residence in a country, together with the free exercise of their religion to religious societies, whose tenets are not pernicious to any principles of civil right; and, in short, to withhold from any one, simply on account of his articles of faith, those charitable services which are in our power.—And this intolerance, according to its doctrine, is sin^z; a renunciation and dishonouring of Christianity and its fundamental principles^a; is the destruction of one of its essential laws, the love of our brethren^b; and even a crime against

^z Rom. xiv. 23.

^a Luke ix. 52—56.

^b 1 Tim. vi. 1—6.

the injured majesty of God^c. When, therefore, as early as the fourth century^d, men, who bore the name of Christians, began to persecute those who differed in religious opinions from themselves, and to consider and to punish what they called heresy as a civil crime; when Augustine placed this religious persecution among the Christian doctrines; when men, in the eighth century, began to propagate the Christian religion (as they erroneously named it) with fire and sword; when shortly afterwards the term *Heretic* became a magic word which transformed thousands of men into tigers; when we read of the christian crusades against heretics and unbelievers; and when, lastly, the inquisition became established in the very bosom of Christendom, that most terrible of all tribunals, which nevertheless was named

^c Rom. xiv. 1—13.

^d See above, p. 90.

the holy, and in the name of Christ and of God murdered, burnt, desolated—

*Tristius haud illa monstrum, nec saevior ulla
Pestis et ira Deum stygiis sese extulit undis &c.*

Who can lay these abuses or even the least part of them to the charge of Christianity? Sooner might we reject all the arts of medicine, because ignorant pretenders to skill in that science have robbed men of their health and lives; sooner condemn all civil society, because tyranny, riot and anarchy have often arisen out of it; sooner call reason, that preeminent quality of man, the pest of humanity, because the Alexanders, Cæsars, Neros, and Buonapartes use it for the devastation of the earth—than call Christianity intolerant on account of the abominations of such disgraces to humanity, who apply to themselves its name! Christianity which first introduced among men a tolerance as unlimited as enlightened and charitable!

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Parallel between the Propagation of Christianity, and of the Religion of Mahomet.

THUS Christianity established itself in the world, never persecuting, but incessantly persecuted ; under various difficulties from within ; and infinite oppositions, persecutions, and cruelties from without ; entirely *through itself*, through its own doctrines and laws ; and spread itself over every part of the globe !—It is true, the religion of Mahomet likewise extended itself with most astonishing rapidity and facility over the face of the earth. Scarcely had ten years elapsed since his flight from Mecca, (the Hejra) when he had brought all the tribes of the Arabians under the yoke of his religion and sovereignty ; and a short time afterwards
his

his religion had swallowed up the numerous and flourishing churches in the East; overflowed the West; and was become the terror of united Christendom. This event is truly astonishing; and the enemies of Christianity have not failed to make use of it as an argument to shew that there was nothing miraculous in the extension of the religion of Jesus*. But in this they have either not known, or have anxiously suppressed, the connections and means of assistance which favoured Mahomet, and which leave nothing wonderful in the success of his doctrine.—Mahomet came into the world exactly at the time proper for his purposes. *Religion* in Arabia Felix, the paternal country of his new system, was then in the most deplorable state.

* Boulaïnvilliers, Vie de Mahomed, avec des réflexions sur la religion Mahomedane, et les coutumes des Musulmans. Amsterdam. 2d edit. 1731, in 8vo. p. 42.

The inhabitants of the country were divided into four religious parties. Some of them were devoted to the idolatrous worship of the Sabians, who adored the stars as divinities: and others to Zendicism, or the idolatry of the Magi, who worshipped fire. The Jewish religion had a great many followers, who treated the others with much cruelty. And the Christians who were resident there at that time, formed principally an assemblage of different heretical sects, who had taken refuge among this free people, because they were not tolerated in the Roman empire. Under such a distracted state of religion, it would have been highly wonderful if Mahomet had not procured in a short time a numerous train of followers. The Christian religion, on the contrary, received its origin in a country where the only true God was worshipped, and the Mosaic law (which it abrogated) universally revered.—The
political

political state of the world at the period when Mahomet appeared was uncommonly favourable to a new conqueror. The Western part of Roman empire was then overflowed by the Goths; and the Eastern so weakened through the Huns and Persians, that it could resist no vigorous attack; without taking into consideration the absurd superstition, the horrid contests, and blood-thirsty spirit of persecution which had then almost entirely extinguished Christianity. In the Persian empire existed ruinous internal commotions which were excited principally through the impious doctrine of Manes, and the desolating principles of Mazdack, who, a short time before the appearance of Mahomet, had given himself out for a prophet, and introduced a community of wives and of property. But at the time of the Apostles the power of the Romans was still in its meridian height, and had united

united almost the whole globe under its sovereignty.

Again, Arabia was very *populous*; many Jews and Christians had taken refuge there from other kingdoms where they had been persecuted by the prevailing sects. The Arabians were a free people; not devoted like other nations to the extravagances of lustful pleasures, but temperate and hardy, and therefore properly qualified for new conquests. This brave people was at that time divided into separate tribes, who were all independent, and connected with one another in no political union: a circumstance which uncommonly facilitated the conquests of Mahomet. Mahomet himself was descended from a family of much power and consequence; and by a marriage with an opulent widow became one of the richest men in Mecca. He was endowed with fine and politic talents; and from the various journies which
he

he made in his mercantile concerns, had acquired a perfect acquaintance with the constitution of the country.— He *compounded* his new religious system out of all the four prevailing religions of Arabia. From the idolatry of the Sabians and Magi he took the divine celebration of Friday, and of the four months in the year; the pilgrimage to Mecca, together with different superstitious fables concerning the resurrection of the dead and the last judgment. From the Jews he borrowed many tales, particularly concerning angels; numerous purifications and fasts; the prohibition of certain kinds of food and of usury; the permission of polygamy and of capricious divorce. From the Christian sects he derived a variety of doctrinal tenets as well false as true, concerning the divine decrees; the authority of Jesus and of the Evangelists; the resurrection of the body; the universal judgment
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of men; together with many moral precepts. Thus he united by this mixture all the four religions of his paternal country; and thereby procured a more easy admittance for his new doctrine.—Further, he established his religion in such a manner that it did *not excite against itself the passions of men*, but on the contrary *flattered them in various ways*. According to his system the sum of religion consisted in the performance of certain corporeal ceremonies—purifications, the recital of certain prayers, alms, fasts, and pilgrimages to Mecca. It was truly much easier to perform these than to restrain lusts, to suppress all sinful appetites, and to confine those which are innocent within their proper bounds. He attributed such a value to these mechanical ceremonies, that he supposed atonement to be thereby made for every crime and every sin. Such a doctrine, so extremely

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trremely accommodating to the sinful passions of every kind; together with the permission of polygamy and capricious divorces; and the promise of a full enjoyment of gross, sensual luxuries in a future life, brought more men under his subjection than could have been effected by a moderate army.— And lastly, Mahomet was not so much a *Prophet* as a *Soldier*. He endeavoured to propagate his religion not through arguments, he did not address it to the understanding; but he appealed to arms, and made it a fundamental law of his religion^f to wage incessant war against unbelievers; and, should they refuse either to become Mahometans, or to purchase a freedom of religion from the hands of the faithful, by the payment of a certain tribute, to decide the matter with the sword.

^f See the Coran, ch. ix.

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Under such circumstances it would have been a phenomenon most wonderful and at variance with the whole analogy of history, if the doctrine of the prophet of Arabia had experienced an unhappy, or even a less fortunate, fate.—But that an history, and a religion founded thereon,—which was diametrically opposed to all the modes of divine service that existed at the time of its origin; and could be established on nothing else but on their ruins—which demanded from its followers under the punishment of eternal misery, a perfect change in the whole train of their thoughts; a detestation of all unchaste pleasures, fornication, adultery, polygamy, wanton and dissolute divorce; the absolute avoidance of all ambitious, covetous and avaritious projects and concerns; and which placed the essence of the true worship of God not in visible ceremonies, but in a pure, humble, philanthropic, and truly

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virtuous

virtuous mind :—that a religion, which was supported by no powerful men; but was preached by thirteen poor, despised and illiterate persons; that this religion; without any the least possible assistance of worldly power; without any active compulsion[§]; but, on the contrary, under the greatest oppression, afflictions and torments of its supporters; should have prevailed over the whole nation of the Jews and the united power of the Romans; should have acquired in a few years many thousand followers; soon afterwards spread itself into the farthest parts of the North and West; and lastly should have subjected even kings and emperours, together with the greatest and most civilized nations; *this* is an event which has not its parallel in all history; and can by no means be explained, without calling to our aid a

§ I speak here of its first propagation.

most extraordinary support of the Almighty.

After what has been said, it is almost incomprehensible how Lord Bolingbroke could object against the Christian religion, that it had produced no effects worthy of a divine origin. What kind of effects is then demanded? 'If the revelations (says Bolingbroke^b) which have been pretended, had not been pretended only—the necessary consequence would have been, that the system of religion and government would have been uniform through the whole world.' And why? 'Because the *divine Omnipotence*^c would have *imposed it on all mankind*, so as necessarily to *engage their assent*.' But God never acts in this manner in the government of the world as far as we are acquainted with it. 'He has given us, as Bolingbroke confesses, a natural revelation of

^b Works, vol. iv. p. 224.

^c Works, vol. v. p. 261—267.

his will; since He has connected with certain modes of conduct either salutary or pernicious consequences, and bestowed Reason on man to enable him to discover them. And yet it is evident, that He does not compel men to comply with this revelation.—Religion cannot operate like a charm or a medicine; we may study and practice it, or not. Agreeably to the moral nature of man, it produces no effects otherwise than through the understanding. And admitting that God had intended to compel men by his Omnipotence to the practice of a certain religion; of what use then would have been an immediate written revelation? Either, therefore, there is no immediate written revelation of God; or the very existence of such a revelation proves, that it is God's will to deal with us, not according to his *Omnipotence*, but in a *moral manner*, and to leave it entirely to our free-will, whether

ther we will follow what He has clearly revealed or not.

Indeed the opponents of Christianity labour to destroy the miracle of its propagation, by producing a variety of *natural causes*, through which they endeavour to explain it. But the greater part of these pretended causes are forged; and even if we unite them all together, this event remains incomprehensible, unless we take into the account a higher support. 1st. What they say, in the first place, of Fanaticism, is amply refuted in page 280 f.—2d. The pretext of universal Tolerance under the Jews and Romans is evidently contradictory to history.^k—2d. And the same may be said in answer to the assertion, that the first supporters of the christian religion were exclusively simple and mean people^l.—Bolingbroke has chosen still another

^k See above, p. 363.

^l See above, p. 342.

mode. He supposes this to have been the cause of its rapid and extensive progress, that the Apostles used the artifice of receiving into the pale of Christianity all, without exception, both Jews and Gentiles^m. But what assistance could that give to a religion which afforded not the least temporal advantage, but, on the contrary, placed its first supporters in danger of losing every thing they possessed in this world, nay even life itself? Suppose a poor, despised man, who could scarcely find support for himself, were to publish a declaration, that he would receive every one without distinction into his service; is it probable that a single person would be induced to enter into it?—Another assertion, that a community of property was introduced in the earliest ages of the church, is stated as a most powerful cause of the propa-

^m Works, vol. iv. p. 306.

gation

gation of Christianity^a. Should we grant, as his Lordship pretends without any foundation and in opposition to history, that such a common stock existed in the primitive church; this very circumstance would have rather hindered the rich and powerful from embracing the religion. But the assertion is evidently false. Such a community of property existed only in the beginning, and indeed only in the parent-community at Jerusalem^b. The converts from Paganism, who composed the far greatest part, were restrained from leaving their former condition and calling^c; that through their diligence they might obtain support for themselves, and a trifle for the assistance of the necessitous^d; but were by no means allowed to afford nourishment

^a Works, vol. iv. p. 422.

^b Acts v. vi.

^c 1 Cor. vii. 17—24. 30, 31. Tit. ii. 9, 10.

^d Ephes. iv. 28.

to the indolent*. And the Apostles themselves followed this precept; they never once permitted the communities to maintain them, but themselves procured their own support*.

Once more:—When we thus observe Christianity arising in the world, continuing and extending itself during eighteen hundred years, continually wider and wider; when we see that neither the idolatry, superstition, and infidelity which furrounded it on all sides; nor the united power of the world, which sought to extirpate it; nor the heretics, who deformed it; nor the wretches, who betrayed it; nor even its unworthy followers, who, particularly since the fourth century, scandalized it by their vices; nor, lastly, time, the great destroyer of all human things, have ever been in a condition, I will not say to annihilate, but even to alter it; we cannot but recognise the

* 2 Thess. iii. 6—12.

* 2 Thess. iii. 7—9.



the New Testament.

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traces of a Superior Providence; we cannot but acknowledge that the *inexplicable* propagation of Christianity is a seal of the truth of the history of the New Testament, and, I dare pronounce, of the divine origin of its religion!

A summary Recapitulation, and Conclusion, of the Credibility of the New Testament.

THUS by the calm and temperate language in which the writers of the New Testament relate their history, we become prejudiced in their favour. They do not declaim on Jesus, they deliver over him no panegyrics; but they let him act and speak. And they inform us of his actions, particularly his miracles, in the most simple manner, without any laboured ornaments,

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without

without any rhetorical amplification; and without any enthusiastic eulogies; nay, without even any calm explication of what is great and supernatural therein. They are related with a striking simplicity, exactly like the most general and common-place circumstances.

These authors, as we have seen above, had every necessary qualification in order to know with certainty the truth of what they relate. We cannot discover in them a single spark of Fanaticism. It is impossible that they could have been deceived in that of which they inform us; and still less were they deceivers: they who published their history on the spot and at the time, where and when it happened; whose narration is in part remarkably confirmed by foreign authors; whose writings contain in themselves so many clear traces of truth; who oppose every kind of deceit in their doctrines

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and

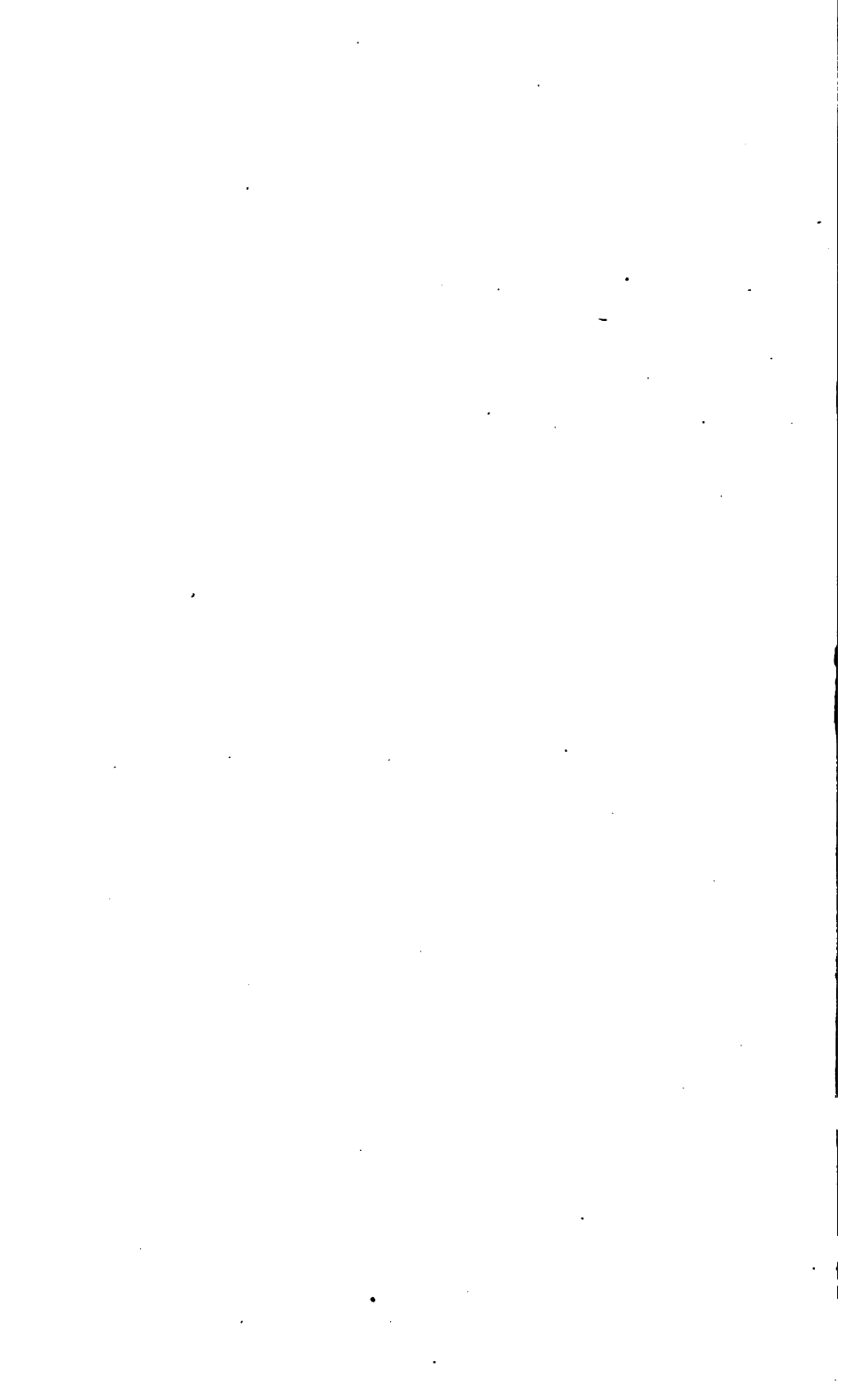
and actions; who from their preaching had no temporal advantages to obtain; but probably all to lose; who, lastly, even sacrificed to their doctrine, rest, civil honour, and life. The character of these men is evidently the most noble and most amiable: open-hearted and honest in their instructions; mild and tolerant towards those who thought differently from themselves; serene and social in common intercourse; affectionate towards their friends; generous towards their enemies—they undertake a life composed of pure fatigue and difficulties, and suffer contempt and torment, in order to promulgate a history and religion built thereon, which they considered as the greatest blessing of the world. And their preaching is attended with the most wonderful effect. They are therefore not only credible; but—they are so in a greater degree than a Tacitus; they are credible

dible evidences in the highest of all possible degrees. So that either there is absolutely no immediate revelation from God, or it is contained in the writings of the New Testament.

THE END.

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